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THE

WHOLE WORKS

OF

THE REV. JAMES HERVEY, A.M.

RECTOR OF WESTON-FAVELL, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOLUME VI.

CONTAINING

THE REMAINDER OF HIS LETTERS.

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A

COLLECTION OF LETTERS

CONTINUED.

LETTER XXIX.

Weston-Favell, March 1745—6.

DEAR SIR,—IN a former letter I considered, Whether the blessed Spirit is really a distinct person: —whether this person is truly and properly God? It appeared from a variety of Scriptures, that both these questions were to be resolved in the affirmative. These preliminaries being settled, I would hope, with some perspicuity of reason and strength of argument, I now proceed, in consequence of my engagement, to examine Mr Tomkins's objections against the received custom of addressing divine worship to this divine Being.

The author, I freely acknowledge, writes with a great appearance of integrity; with a calm and decent spirit of controversy; and with a very plausible air of truth. As the subject of his inquiry is of the highest dignity and importance, as his method of managing the debate is, to say the least, by no means contemptible, I cannot forbear expressing some surprise, that none of the ingenious dissenters to whom the piece is particularly inscribed, have thought proper to interest themselves in the dispute, and either confute what is urged, or else (like persons of that inviolable attachment to the pure scriptural worship which they profess) recede from the use of their allowed doxologies.

For my part, as I firmly believe it a proper practice to worship the Son, as we worship the Father, and to worship the Holy Ghost, as we worship the other persons of the undivided Trinity, I am so far from disapproving, that I admire our customary doxology, and think it a very noble and instructive part of our sacred service. Noble, because it exhibits one of the grand mysteries, and glorious peculiarities of the gospel; instructive, because it so frequently reminds the worshipper of a point which it so greatly concerns him to believe, and which is fitted to inspire the brightest, the strongest hopes, of final, of complete salvation.

But lest this persuasion should be deemed the crude production of early prejudice, rather than the mature fruit of sedate consideration, we will very readily hear whatever can be alleged against it; and not willingly secrete one objection, or misrepresent one argument, occurring in the inquiry.

"Let it be supposed," says our author, "that the Holy Spirit is one of the persons of the Godhead; I still query, What warrant Christians have for a direct and distinct worship of this third person in the Godhead?" (page 1.) I should think there can be no reasonable doubt, whether worship is to be paid to the Divinity. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, is a law of incontestable authority, and eternal obligation. As for the circumstances of worship included in its being direct, this cannot alter the case, nor render the practice improper. According to my apprehension, all true and genuine worship is direct. If it be addressed to the divine object at second hand, it has more of the nature of idolatry than worship. Such is the religious foppery of the Papists, who will not apply directly to the Father of everlasting compassion, but adore God as it were by proxy. With regard to the distinctness of the worship, this depends entirely upon the Scripture's distinguishing their persons. If this be clearly done, the distinctness of worship is properly authorized,

and the fitness of it follows of course. If the inspired writers assure us that the Father is God, this is a sufficient warrant to pay divine honours to the Father. If the inspired writers affirm that the Son is God, this is a sufficient ground for ascribing divine honours to the Son. If the same inspired writers declare that the Holy Ghost is God, we need no clearer warrant, nor can we have a louder call, to pay him our devoutest homage. In a word, it is the voice of reason, it is the command of Scripture, it is founded on the unalterable relation of things, that worship, direct worship, distinct worship, all worship, be rendered to the Deity. So that the divinity of the Holy Ghost, exclusive of any apostolical precept or example, is an incomparably better reason for ascribing divine honours to this sacred person, than the bare want of such precept or example can be a reason to justify the omission, or condemn the performance of it.

I am no advocate for implicit faith in any human determination or opinion. Should I see whole sects, or whole churches in a glaring error, such as I can prove from Scripture to be palpably wrong, and of pernicious tendency, I would make no scruple to remonstrate, dissent, and enter my protest. But in a case, which Mr Tomkins himself (page 2. line 19.) allows to be of a dubious nature; where I have no positive proof from God's holy word that the practice is unlawful or improper; I cannot but apprehend, that it becomes a modest person, diffident of his own judgment, to acquiesce in the general, the long-continued usage of all the churches. This is urged by an inspired writer as a forcible motive for rejecting a practice; and why should not I admit it as a motive of weight for adhering to a practice? We have no such custom, neither the churches of God, (1 Cor. xi. 16.) was an apostolical argument. And in an instance where we are not precluded by any prohibition of Scripture, I think the reasoning is equally conclusive if changed to the affirmativ

We have such a custom, and the churches of God. Was I to settle my opinion, and adjust my conduct, with regard to such a point, I should be inclined to argue in the following manner: I cannot bring one text from the sacred writings which forbids the usage; and as it is unanimously practised by devout persons of almost every denomination, as it has been the received, the uninterrupted practice of the Christian church for more than a thousand years; who am I, that I should disturb the peace, or separate myself from the communion of the church, for a procedure which such multitudes of excellent persons maintain to be consonant, and which I cannot prove to be contrary, to the sense of Scripture? Who am I, that I should fancy myself to have more of the mind of God than the whole united church of true believers, eminent saints, and illustrious martyrs?

"But there is no precept for this worship in Scripture," (page 1.) and Dr Owen affirms, "That a divine command is the ground" (he means, I presume, the only ground, or else the quotation is nothing to our author's purpose) "of all worship," (page 25.) Dr Owen's character, I own, is considerable, as well as his assertion peremptory; but yet I cannot prevail on myself to submit to his *ipse dixit* as an oracle, nor reverence his judgment as infallible. I would ask the Doctor, What divine command the Heathens ever received to worship the blessed God? I know of no verbal or written precept. But they saw their warrant included in their wants; they perceived their obligation resulting from the divine attributes. Will Dr Owen maintain, that no worship was expected from the Pagans? that they had been blameless, and acted according to the principles of their duty, if they had withheld all acts of veneration from the Deity? No, surely. St Paul, in declaring them faulty for not worshipping the Almighty in such a rational manner as was suitable to his pure and exalted nature, clearly intimates, that it was their

duty both to worship, and to worship aright. It is not said by the apostle, though it is the consequence of the Doctor's position, that they ought to have refrained from all worship, and not have meddled with matters of devotion, till they received an authentic warrant from revelation. The inspired casuist grounds his duty, in this particular, upon the eternal power and Godhead (Rom. i. 20.) of the Supreme Being, which were discoverable by the exercise of their understandings, and from a survey of the creation. In conformity to the apostle's sentiments, I should rather place the foundation of religious worship in the glories, the mercies, the unsearchable riches, of the almighty Majesty. These, together with the relation which dependent creatures bear to this all-producing, all-sustaining, infinitely beneficent God, are the grand warrant to authorize addresses of adoration. These are reasons prior to all express revelations, and would have subsisted if actual commands had never been given. If this be not true, what will become of all natural religion? Scripture, indeed, has declared explicitly the binding nature of these motives; Scripture, like a sacred herald, has promulgated what God foreordained, what reason had decreed, what necessarily flowed from the habitudes of persons and things. Or, to represent the point in another light, the perfections of the Godhead are the original, the inviolable obligation to all expressions of homage and devotion: to ratify this obligation, and impart to it all possible solemnity and sanction, Scripture has added the broad seal of heaven. If this be right reason, and if the Holy Ghost be really God, his all-sufficient excellencies, and my state of dependence, are a proper license, or rather a virtual mandamus, for the applications of prayer and the ascriptions of praise. Grant this one proposition relating to the divinity of the blessed Spirit, and admit that his eternal power and Godhead are a sufficient ground for religious worship, and we shall find ourselves unavoidably deter

mined. We must rebel against our reason, must violate the dictates of our conscience, must act in opposition, not to one particular text, but to the main tenor and scope of the whole Scripture, if we do not render all the service, yield all the reverence due to a glorious Being, in whom we live, move, and exist.

But still we are told, in various places, again and again we are told, "That there is no express warrant." Prodigious stress is laid upon this word *express*; the whole force of the objection seems to terminate on this point. There is no express warrant, therefore it is an unwarrantable practice. For my part, I have not discernment enough to perceive the conclusiveness of this arguing. I must beg leave to deny the consequence of such a syllogism. For if the sense of various Scriptures has made it a duty, this is warrant enough, though it be not particularly enjoined, or tolerated in form. This maxim our ingenious author will admit in other cases, and why not in the present? There is no express command to add any prayer at the celebration of baptism. When our Lord instituted the ordinance, he only delivers the form of initiation into the Christian church, without any prescription relating to concomitant prayer. When Philip administered this sacrament to the eunuch, there is no mention of any address to the Almighty, pertinent to the occasion. I cannot recollect, that any of the holy writers either inform the world that they practised such a method themselves, or so much as intimate that they would advise others, in succeeding ages, to accompany this solemnity with suitable devotions. But though we have no positive injunction, we have the reasonableness of the thing for our plea. Other Scriptures, that virtually, though not explicitly recommend it, are our warrant. In every thing, says St Paul, let your requests be made known unto God; consequently, in this sacred and important thing.

I must again declare, that I can by no means assent to our author's grand postulatum, That nothing

in the way of divine worship is allowable, but what has an express warrant from Scripture. Because virtual warrants are warrants; consequential warrants are warrants. Our objector must maintain this in some instances, and why should he disclaim it in others? To be consistent in conduct is surely essential to the character of an impartial inquirer after truth. Shall such an one sometimes reject an argument as weak and insignificant, because it happens to be illative only, and not direct; and at other times urge it as cogent and irrefragable? I will mention one very memorable particular of this nature; that is, the case of the Lord's day. Why does Mr Tomkins transfer the sanctification of a particular day from the seventh to the first? Has he any express command in Scripture, any express warrant from Scripture for this alteration? If he has, let him produce it. I must own, I have none but consequential warrants; warrants formed upon conclusions, and derived from some remarkable scriptures; but these not near so numerous, nor near so ponderous, as those which concur to establish the divinity of the Holy Ghost. Now, if an express warrant be not needful in the one, why should it be so rigorously insisted on in the other duty? If then this leading principle of our author's be false or precarious, what truth, what certainty can there be in any, in all his deductions from it? If the groundwork be unsubstantial, and the foundation fall, what solidity can there be in the superstructure? how can the building stand? Possibly Mr Tomkins may reply, "the example of the primitive church determines this point." We find, it was the custom of the earliest antiquity to observe the Christian sabbath on the first day of the week; and therefore have very good reason to believe that the usage was established by apostolical authority. And may not I say the same with regard to the custom of ascribing glory, and rendering adoration, to the third person of the Trinity? Justin Martyr, the most ancient and auther

tic apologist for Christianity, who is next in succession, and next in credit to the *patres apostolici;* he declares expressly, That it was the received custom of the Christian church, in his days, to worship the Holy Ghost. His words are, Πνευμα προφητικον σεβομεθα μετα λογου τιμωμεν, αποδειξομεν. You perceive, he not only avows the thing, but vindicates its reasonableness and propriety. Perhaps some captious critic may insinuate, that it is matter of doubt, whether the word τιμωμεν implies divine honours. I waive all attempts to prove this point from the original of the New Testament, because, to obviate such an objection, we have another passage to produce from the same saint, father, and martyr, Πνευμα προφητικον σεβομεθα και προσκυνουμεν, Apol. 1. Can any expressions be imagined more forcible in their signification, or more apposite to our purpose? They import the highest acts of adoration, and yet they describe the regards which were paid by the purest antiquity to the Holy Ghost. Will it still be suggested, that Justin makes no mention of offering up prayers, or addressing praises? I answer, This he must certainly mean, because no one can be said σεβεσθαι και προσκυνειν τον Θεον η το Πνευμα, who withholds praise, or restrains prayer. These particular instances are as necessarily implied in those general terms, as the species is included in the genus.

You will please to observe, that this amounts to a great deal more than Mr Tomkins, (page 17.), not very ingenuously, suggests, viz. "a few hints that learned men have found, in the primitive ages, of the ascription of praise to the Holy Ghost." It seems also entirely to overthrow what, in another place, he advances (page 26.) not very consistently with truth, viz. "That there is so little appearance of the observance of such a custom, for so many ages of the Christian church." Few hints and little appearance! Can a clear and determinate declaration, made by a writer of the most unquestionable veracity, concerning the unanimous, the universal practice of the ancient church; can this evidence, with any fairness

or equity, be rated at the diminutive degree of hints, and little appearance?

As to what is remarked relating to the corruption of the early writers, the interpolations, or alterations made by careless transcribers, (page 17.), this seems to be a most empty and jejune insinuation. It is what will serve any side of any debate. It is opposing hypothesis to fact; precarious and unsupported hypothesis, to clear and undeniable fact. This sure is catching, not at a twig, but at a shadow. I never could like Dr Bentley's *oscitantia et hallucinatio librariorum*, even in his animadversions on heathen authors; because it was an outcry fitted for any occasion, a charge ever ready at hand, and equally suited to discountenance truth or detect error; much less can I think it sufficient to overthrow the testimony, or invalidate the authenticity of our ancient Christian writers. Would a bare innuendo, (and Mr Tomkins's is no more), and that from an interested person, without any the least shew of proof; would this be admitted, in a court of judicature, to supersede the plain, the solemn deposition of a credible witness? Supersede it! Quite the reverse. It would convince the judge, and teach the jury, that the cause must be extremely wrong, utterly insupportable, since artifices so weak and transparently fallacious were used in its defence.

But it is frequently objected, that no mention is made, no warrant is to be found for distinct worship. The afore-cited writer, and the whole Scripture, is silent upon the article of distinct worship. And the reader is led to suppose, that there is some mighty difference between distinct and I know not what other kind of worship. Why does our author harp so incessantly upon this string? whence such irreconcileable aversion to this quality of worship? One would almost suspect he was conscious that some worship should be paid, but could not digest the doctrine, nor submit to the payment of distinct worship. I must reply, once for all, that if any worship

be due, distinct worship cannot be improper; much more if all worship (which, I apprehend, is included in Justin's words, and follows from the divinity of the blessed Spirit) be requisite, distinct worship cannot be unwarrantable.

Another grand argument urged by our inquirer is, "That the apostles, as far as appears, never practised this worship of the Holy Ghost themselves, nor recommended it to others," (page 2.) He should, by all means, have printed *as far as appears* in Italics or capitals; because then the reader would have apprehended more easily the uncertain foundation on which the reasoning is built. But though this particular, relating to the practice of the apostles, does not appear one way or the other, yet our author, in his 4th page, and elsewhere, concludes from it as assuredly as if it stood upon authentic record. "For," says he, "if we admit that the reason of things is sufficient to establish this practice, it will prove too much." It will undoubtedly, if it proves any thing, prove it a duty to pay such worship to the Holy Spirit; and consequently, that the apostles were defective, either in not seeing this reason of things as well as we, or not practising according to it. Does he not here suppose the apostolical omission an acknowledged, undoubted point, which, a few lines before, he had confessed to be dubious and unapparent?

However, not to insist upon this little self-contradicting slip, I would ask, What reason has Mr Tomkins to conclude, that the apostles omitted this usage which the Christian churches have adopted? Do they ever declare, or so much as hint, that they are determined to omit it? Do they ever caution their converts against it as a dangerous error? Is there any such memorial preserved, or any such caveat lodged in their secret writings? Now, to argue in our author's strain, If it was so unjustifiable a thing to address praise, or put up prayer to the Holy Ghost, there could not be a more necessary precau-

tion than that the apostles, those careful instructors, should have warned their people of the mistake, especially since it was so extremely probable, so almost unavoidable, that they would fall into it. For I appeal to the whole world, whether a considerate person would not naturally judge it reasonable, whether a devout person would not feel a forcible inclination, to worship that venerable Name into which he was baptized; and to praise that beneficent Being, who is the author of so many inestimable blessings. Yet though this is so apparently natural, such as the apostles could not but foresee was likely to happen, they say not a syllable by way of prevention; they take no care to guard their converts against such a practice. A pregnant sign, that it is allowed by divine Wisdom, and chargeable neither with superstition nor idolatry.

But our author, to corroborate his argument, adds, "To suppose the apostles directed any explicit worship to the Holy Ghost, though we have no mention of it in Scripture, where yet we meet with frequent doxologies of theirs, and addresses by way of prayer or petition," would be an unreasonable presumption. I cannot accede to this assertion. The doxologies and prayers of the apostles, recorded in Scripture, are only occasional and incidental; inserted, as the fervour of a devout spirit suggested, in the body of their doctrinal and exhortatory writings. Now, the omission of such a practice in writings, which were composed with a view of instructing mankind in the great fundamentals of Christianity, which were never intended as a full and complete system of devotions; the omission of this practice in such writings can be no fair or conclusive argument for its being omitted in their stated acts of public worship. If, indeed, the apostles had in their epistolary correspondence drawn up a form of devotions; had declared, that in them was comprised a perfect pattern of devotional addresses, proper to be offered to the Deity; that all acts of worship which deviated a jot or tittle from

that prescribed form were unwarrantable; if such a composition had been transmitted from the apostles, and we had found no such addresses therein as those for which we are pleading, I should then allow a good deal of force in the argument drawn from the apostolical omission; though, at the same time, I could not be able to forbear wondering at the inconsistency of their doctrines, which teach us that the Holy Ghost is God, and of their worship, which refuses him divine honours. But I think, as the case stands, no solid argument, nothing but a specious cavil, can be formed from this circumstance of its being unpractised in the writings of the apostles.

"It does not appear that the apostles addressed distinct worship to the Blessed Spirit; therefore we conclude, that they actually addressed none:"—As though fact and appearance were convertible terms. I am surprised, that an author of Mr Tomkins's penetration can prevail upon himself to be satisfied, or should offer to impose upon his readers, with a deduction so very illogical. Is the not appearing of a thing, a certain argument, or indeed any argument at all, for its not existing? It does not appear that there are mountains, or groves, or rivers beneath our horizon: It does not appear that there are any such vessels as lymphatics, any such fluid as the chyle, in these living bodies of ours. But by comparing them with others that have been dissected, and by reasoning from indisputable principles relating to the animal economy, we assure ourselves of the reality of both these particulars. Consider, sir, into what unnumbered absurdities, and evident falsehoods, this way of arguing would betray us, if pursued in all its consequences. It will prove, if we once admit it as a test of truth, that nothing was transacted by scriptural men, but what is particularly recorded in scripture history. I nowhere read Isaac circumcised his son Jacob, or instructed his household after the example of his father Abraham. But shall we infer, from the silence of Scripture with regard to these matters,

that he never conformed to the former institution, nor performed the latter service? I should much rather believe, that, as he bears the character of a godly man, he walked in both these statutes and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And since the apostles uniformly agree in this grand premise, That the Holy Ghost is God, it seems much more reasonable to conclude from hence, that they paid him direct worship, than from their bare silence to infer, that they neglected this practice. I nowhere read in the sacred writings, that St Peter suffered martyrdom, or sealed the testimony of Christ with his blood. But must we, on this account, persuade ourselves that he was not one of the noble army of martyrs? No, you will say, it is very supposable that he laid down his life for his Saviour, even though this event is not expressly recorded, because our Lord clearly predicts it, when he informs him by what death he should glorify God. And may not I reply, with parity of reason, it is very supposable that the apostles, in their solemn devotions, addressed direct and distinct worship to the Holy Ghost, because their declaring their belief in his personality and divinity was a strong intimation that they should, was a sort of prediction that they would, render all kind of homage and adoration to him. Upon the whole, if this be a mere presumption, no better than a *gratis dictum*, that the apostles did not worship the Holy Ghost; then all the specious arguments derived from hence drop of course.

Our objector still insists, "That this is not a necessary part of Christian worship," (page 2.) Be pleased to observe, how he departs from his first proposal. His first inquiry, that which the title-page exhibits, was, Whether this be warrantable? then, with an evasive dexterity, he slips into another topic, and maintains that it cannot be necessary. Whether this be tergiversation or inaccuracy, I shall not stay to examine; but must ask Mr Tomkins, What reason he has for this positive determination,

cannot be necessary? Because, on the contrary supposition, "we shall condemn the apostles as guilty of a great omission," (page 2.) This argument the author uses more than once, therefore I may be excused in replying to it once again: We can have no pretence to condemn the apostles, till we have undeniable proof that there was such an omission in their conduct. Who can assert, who dares maintain, that, when the apostles were met together in the holy congregation, for large, solemn, copious devotion, they never recognized the divinity of the three sacred Persons, never addressed distinct acts of praise or invocation to each respectively? This, Mr Tomkins may persist in supposing; but, after all he can suggest in vindication of this principle, it will amount to no more than a bare supposal. I may, at least, as fairly suppose the very reverse; and I think have the suffrage of reason, the analogy of Scripture, the consent of the purest antiquity, on my side. However, in case Mr Tomkins had demonstrated, by incontestable evidence, that the practice under consideration cannot be necessary; does he confine himself, in every instance, to what is strictly necessary? Does he not allow himself in what is expedient? Could I not mention various particulars, which are not absolutely necessary, but yet they are decent and useful; they contribute to the beauty and harmony of worship, to the comfort and edification of the worshippers? Perhaps, it may not be necessary to particularize in our devotions the present distress of our nation, and to form particular petitions suitable to our national exigencies, or particular thanksgivings accommodated to our national deliverances. But since this is very expedient; since it tends to beget in all a more lively sense of our dependence on divine Providence; since it is a most emphatical method of ascribing to the supreme Disposer the glory of all our public mercies; this practice is very becoming, very proper, very useful. Should I plead, in opposition to this custom, that it is not absolutely

necessary: Your prayers may be acceptable to God, and beneficial to your country, without such particularizing: St Paul gives no express command, sets no explicit example of any such usage: there is no precedent from any of the apostles, where the affairs of the state under which they lived are particularly displayed before God in humble supplication:— Would Mr Tomkins think this a sufficient reason for him in his private, or for ministers in their public devotions, to discontinue the practice? No, verily; the propriety, the expediency of the thing would justify and ascertain its use, even though no scriptural pattern had recommended, no scriptural precept enjoined it.

It is affirmed, (page 5.) That "the addresses of the New Testament are always made to the Father, or to the Son;" and it is added, (page 10.) "that there is neither rule nor example in it for worshipping any other person whatever." This point our author affirms with a very positive air, as though it were incapable of being controverted; and therefore often builds assertions on it, often makes deductions from it. Suppose it was an undeniable truth, I think we have shewn that it can be no satisfactory proof, that in all the enlarged devotions of the apostles, no addresses were offered to the Blessed Spirit, because a few short ejaculations made no explicit mention of him. But this assertion, perhaps, upon a closer examination, may appear too bold and unjustifiable; somewhat like the position which has been advanced with regard to the sentiments of the primitive writers, and practice of the primitive church. It might be proper to consider, on this occasion, 2 Thess. iii. 5. The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and patience of Christ. This you will allow to be a prayer of benediction. You will also observe, that here is particular mention of three persons. The Lord, who is the object of the invocation, and bestower of the blessing, is neither the Father, nor the Son. And who then can it be but the Holy G

whose amiable office it is to shed abroad the love of God in our hearts, Rom. v. 5. It will not, I presume, be intimated, that this is the only passage of the kind. For were it the only one, yet, where the evidence is infallible, we need not the mouth of two or three witnesses to establish the matter in debate. However, for further satisfaction, we may consult 1 Thess. iii. 11—13.; 2 Thess. ii. 16. If we consider these texts in conjunction with those scriptures which speak of the Holy Ghost as a distinct person, we shall perceive a beautiful propriety, and a particular emphasis, in understanding the verses as mentioning the sacred persons severally. The latter text especially, considered in this view, is extremely pertinent, has a very admirable propriety, and agreeably to a maxim laid down by a great master of correct writing,—

Reddere personæ scit convenientia cuique.

Our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God and our Father, who hath loved us, and given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work. Supposing the three persons implored in this supplication, every thing that is attributed to each has a perfect conformity with that part which each is represented as acting in the blessed work of redemption: *e. g.* Our Father, who hath loved us; for God so loved the world, saith St John, that he gave his only begotten Son. God, the Holy Ghost, who hath given us everlasting consolation; for it is the peculiar office of the blessed Spirit to administer comfort, called therefore the Paraclete. Jesus Christ, who hath given us good hope through grace: We have hope in Christ, saith the apostle to the Corinthians; and nothing is more frequently celebrated, by the apostolical writers, than the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Behold then a pertinency, a beauty, a significant distinction, and an exact harmony between all the parts of this verse, if taken in our sense; but a strange, confused, tautological kind of diction, if

you disallow that the three divine persons are distinctly applied to.

Page 6. it is suggested, "That we may incur the resentment of the other two persons, as shewing a neglect or disrespect to them, if, of our own heads, we should in any peculiar and distinguishing form worship the Father." This, sure, is a most unworthy insinuation, as though the infinitely sublime and glorious persons of the Godhead were meanly ambitious or weakly jealous. This is measuring the Deity, not by our reason, which is a very incompetent standard; not by our senses, which are still more inadequate judges; but even by our sordid and vile affections. But not to insist upon this gross error; not to aggravate this affront offered to the adorable Trinity; this intimation, and others of the like strain, seem to be founded on a great mistake with relation to the nature of the Godhead. The essence is one, though the persons are distinct. So that whatever honour is paid to any person, is paid to the one undivided essence. If we call Jesus the Lord, St Paul assures us, it is to the glory of God the Father. Whoever sees the Son, our Saviour himself declares, sees the Father also; *i. e.* Whoever has a right understanding of the Son, and sees by faith his divine excellencies; that man sees, is acquainted with, the perfections of the Father also; and for this obvious reason, because the Father and Son are one. And will not this hold good with regard to the Holy Spirit? If so, whatever honour is paid to one, is paid to all the three sacred persons; or rather, whatever devout ascriptions of praise are addressed to either of the divine persons, they are addressed to the one living incomprehensible God. I wish Mr Tomkins had atttended to this consideration. It might have guarded him against some other unwary expressions, which imply the notion of Polytheism; particularly that in page 10. where he tells us, "that the Scripture sets forth the Father and the Son as the objects of worship." I cannot find any such representation

Scripture. The Scripture is uniform, and consistent, and speaking of but one God, speaks of but one object of divine worship, viz. the infinite Deity, distinguished by a threefold personality. This may seem strange; but since we have the Saviour's word, and the apostle's evidence, to support the tenet, it should, methinks, be admitted as true. This may seem strange; but is it therefore to be rejected as false? At this rate, we must deny the existence of a thousand phenomena in nature; we must explode as impossibilities numberless apparent facts.

Page 7. the inquirer advances a very unaccountable proposition. "It should seem," says he, "that the Son of God had quitted for that time (during his humiliation) his claim to divine worship; though it should be granted that he did receive divine worship before." I must ask with the Jewish ruler, How can these things be? Can God abandon his divinity? Can he cease to be supremely great and good? Is he not (I would not say by the necessity, but by the absolute perfection of his nature,) to-day and yesterday, and for ever the same? If so, it seems impossible that creatures should, for so much as a single instant, be released from the duty of adoration; it seems impossible, (with reverence be it spoken), that God should relinquish his claim to their profoundest homage. This would be to deny himself; which the apostle reckons among the Αδυνατα, 2 Tim. ii. 13. Αρνησασθαι εαυτον ου δυναται. This tenet, I imagine, is contrary not only to reason, but to Scripture. I should be pleased to know, whether Mr Tomkins, when he was composing this paragraph, recollected that memorable saying of our Lord, John iii. 13. No man hath ascended into heaven, but he who came down from heaven, even the Son of Man who is in heaven. Is not this a manifest proof, that our Saviour was in heaven by his divine nature, even while his human nature was sojourning on earth, or confined within the limits of a scanty apartment? And if the divine Son, while holding in his humanity

a conference with Nicodemus, was present by his Godhead in the heavenly regions, could angels be insensible of his presence? and if sensible of his presence, could they withhold their adoration? *Credat Judæus Apella, non ego.* Let Socinians, and men that are called infidels, believe such an absurdity. I cannot reconcile it to my apprehensions. Our Lord emptied himself, it is true; because when he appeared among mortals, he appeared without the pomp and splendour of his celestial majesty. He suffered no such glory to irradiate and adorn his person as surrounded him on the mount of transfiguration, and will invest him when he comes to judge the world; but was in all things such as we are, sin only excepted. Thus he humbled himself, not by disrobing his eternal Godhead of its essential dignity, but by withholding the manifestations of it, in that inferior nature which he was pleased to assume.

Page 8. Our author seems to mistake the meaning of that royal edict issued out in the heavenly world: Let all the angels of God worship him, Heb. i. 6. He supposes this was a command to worship the Son in the sublime capacity of God over all. This, surely, could not be the sense of the words; because a command of such an import must be needless. This was the natural, the unchangeable, the indispensable duty of all creatures; and such as those superior intelligences could not but easily discern, such as those upright spirits could not but readily obey, without any particular injunction. The command, therefore, I apprehend, is rather referable to the humanity of our blessed Redeemer; to that nature in Immanuel which purged away our sins, by becoming a propitiatory sacrifice. This was made higher than the angels. This had an illustrious name given it, to which every knee should bow. This was exalted into heaven; angels, and authorities, and powers, being made subject unto the man Christ Jesus. If this remark be true, then our author's interpretation is erroneous; consequently his rou-

about argument, derived from a mistaken principle, must fall to nothing.

Page 12. in the note, our objector asks, "Did the people of Israel, upon hearing these words, I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, ever imagine that there were three persons then speaking?" This question, I suppose, is intended to invalidate the doctrine of the Trinity. But the great article stands upon a rock, too impenetrable to be undermined by such an interrogatory; too immoveable to be shaken by such a suggestion. I pretend not to give a categorical answer to the query, but only desire to observe, that the people of Israel have several intimations in their sacred books, of a plurality of persons in the unity of the divine essence. They were accustomed to hear Moses speak in the plural number, when he relates the wonderful work of creation, Let us make man. Their inspired and royal preacher spoke of the almighty Maker of them, and of all things, in plural terms, Remember now thy Creator, Eccl. xii. 1. in the original, Creators. The prophets acknowledged and teach this grand mystery, particularly the evangelical prophet Isaiah, chap. lxiii. 9, 10. So that, if the children of Jacob and Joseph were ignorant of this awful truth, it seems owing rather to the blindness of their understandings than to the want of proper discoveries from above. But be the case as it is supposed with regard to the Jews, are we obliged to copy their ignorance? Must their sentiments be our guide? their imaginations the model of our creed? Surely for a Christian to argue, or even to surmise, that there is no such thing, because the ancient Jews were not acquainted with it, is altogether as unreasonable as it would be unphilosophical to maintain, that there are no such places as America or Greenland, because they were both unknown to the ancient inhabitants of Canaan. Mr Tomkins cannot but know, that it is the excellency of the evangelical dispensation to take off the veil

from the Mosaical; that we, by comparing their law with our gospel, by applying the interpretation of our apostles to the doctrines of their prophets, are able to see clearly what they perceived but dimly. Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost, says St Stephen; as your fathers did, so do ye, Acts vii. 51. If this reproof be compared with the several narratives recorded in the Old Testament, concerning the stiff-necked and refractory behaviour of the Jews, we shall gather, by the clearest deduction, that the Holy Ghost is Jehovah. Perhaps the Israelites, when they heard the psalmist playing upon his harp, and singing this congratulatory hymn of praise, Thou art ascended up on high, thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men; yea, even for thy enemies, that the Lord God might dwell among them, Psalm lxviii. 18.; the Israelites, I say, upon hearing these words, might not be aware, that the person who ascended up on high was the blessed Jesus; and that the Lord God dwelling among, dwelling in, depraved disobedient mortals, to renew and reclaim them, was the Holy Ghost. But we, by collating Eph. iv. 8. with the former part of the verse, and John xiv. 17. Rom. viii. 11. with the latter, are, to our exceeding great consolation, brought to the knowledge of these glorious doctrines.

Page 14. our author observes, "That Dr Watts would prove the propriety of paying divine worship to the Holy Ghost, from the form of administering baptism." This argument he undertakes to invalidate. He proceeds in a very unexpected manner; springs a mine, of which we were not at all apprehensive. What if it should turn to the overthrow of his own tenet? The Doctor maintains, "That baptism is a piece of worship." Our author replies, "That hearing the word, in the public assemblies, may also be reputed a piece of worship." May it so? Then, *ex ore tuo*; your own concession confutes your opinion. For, if to hear the word with assiduity, with reverence, with an humble expect-

tion of its becoming the instrument of our salvation; if this be a species of worship, it is doubtless a worship paid to him who is the author and giver of the word. Now, we are sure that it was the Holy Ghost, who spake by the prophets, who spake by the apostles, who spake all the words of that life, which in our religious congregations are explained and enforced.

Page 15. Mr Tomkins urges the expression of St Paul, 1 Cor. x. 2. which I cannot forbear suspecting, notwithstanding all the remonstrances of charity, which thinketh no evil, he wilfully misunderstands. It is evident, on the very first glance, that Moses in that place cannot mean the man Moses; but the system of religion, the body of laws, moral, judicial, and ceremonial, which were by him delivered to the Jews. Is it therefore a proof, that to be baptized into the name of the Holy Ghost is no act of worship to that divine person, because it was no act of worship to Moses to have been baptized into an economy instituted by God, and only promulgated by Moses?

For my part, I am steadfastly persuaded, that to be baptized into the name of the Holy Ghost is a very noble and sublime kind of worship; not to say, an indispensable obligation to all other instances and degrees of worship. It is coupled with that greatest of Christian duties, believing; which I take to be a worship of the mind, far more important than any bodily homage, without which all external expressions of adoration are mere formality. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved. I verily think no one will deny, that baptism is, at least, equal in its import to circumcision; instead of which it seems to be substituted. Now, circumcision was evidently a token and ratification of the covenant of Jehovah. It was a visible attestation to the person circumcised, that the Lord was his God, engaged by covenant to protect, bless, and make him finally happy. It was a solemn declaration of an absolute

self-surrender to the blessed God, to acknowledge him for the only Lord, to serve him in all dutiful obedience, to seek his glory, and to be resigned to his will. This seems to have been the meaning of that divinely appointed rite, emphatically expressed in the words of the Jewish legislator, "Thou hast this day avouched the Lord to be thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and to hearken unto his voice. And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people," Deut. xxvi. 17, 18. And can we imagine that baptism, which has superseded circumcision, is inferior to it in significancy? Or can we imagine that these solemn acts of recognizing the Lord for our only God, and consecrating ourselves to his honour, are no expressions of worship?

Though this dedication of ourselves to the service of the Holy Ghost should be implied in the ordinance of baptism, "still it must be granted," replies our author, "that this can be no other service of the Spirit than what is enjoined in the New Testament," (page 15.) Thereby insinuating, that it is somewhat different from the service we stand engaged to yield both to the Father and to the Son. But, according to all the allowed methods of speech, the baptized person is dedicated alike to each of the three sacred persons; he avows them all to be the object of his worship, and the author of his salvation. There is no manner of difference in the terms which specify the obligations; and since divine wisdom has made them the same, why should we presume to pronounce them diverse? How unaccountably strange would the baptismal form be on our objector's interpretation: I baptize thee into an obligation to adore, to obey, to worship the Father and the Son; but not to pay the same reverential and devout regards to the Holy Ghost? What writer of ingenuity, in order to support a singular hypothesis, would do such apparent violence to the meaning of the sacred text? What reader of discernment would become a con-

vert to an opinion, which must darken and pervert the most evident sense of Scripture, in order to acquire an air of plausibility? Suppose a person should, in making his last will, express himself in the following style: I constitute A, B, and C, my joint executors; I give and bequeath to them whatever remains of my estate and goods, when my legacies are paid and my debts cleared. Would it not be a most extravagant and unreasonable pretence if a captious neighbour should maintain, that C is not vested with an equal power, has not a right to an equal dividend with A and B? If a gentleman of the long robe should offer to give this for law, would he not forfeit his character either of sagacity or integrity? If none of these observations will convince Mr Tomkins that he has misrepresented the tenor and extent of the baptismal engagement, we will, in order to bring the matter, if possible, to an amicable accommodation, accede even to his own assertion. He argues, "That no other service of the Spirit can be meant, but such as is enjoined in the New Testament." Agreed: let us join issue on this footing: let us rest the cause on this bottom. As it is Mr Tomkins's own motion, I hope he will acquiesce in the result of such a trial. Now the New Testament, both virtually and explicitly, requires us to acknowledge the Holy Ghost to be God and Lord; and what service is payable, according to the prescriptions of the New Testament, to such a Being? This, and no other, I would render myself; this, and no other, is rendered by all the churches. I do not so much as attempt to be an advocate for any other worship to be addressed to the divine Spirit, than what the evangelical Scriptures direct us to offer unto that majestic and venerable, that tremendous and amiable name, the Lord our God. If therefore the New Testament demands all honour and adoration, as the inviolable due of this most exalted Being, then Mr Tomkins must either flatly deny the divinity of the Holy Ghost, must contra-

dict the express declaration of the inspired writers on this head, or else confess that his notion stands condemned even on his own principles.

What is alleged from 1 Cor. i. 13. seems to corroborate our sentiments, rather than to support his. St Paul asks, with warmth, and a sort of holy indignation, μη το ονομα Παυλου εβαπτισθητε? he speaks of it as an absurd and shocking thing. Now, what could render this so odious and monstrous a practice, such as the apostle disclaims and rejects with abhorrence? Nothing, that I can apprehend, but the horrid evil it would imply—the evil of ascribing divine honours to Paul, making Paul an object of worship, and consecrating persons to a creature, who ought to be consecrated only to the Creator, God blessed for ever. So that I must declare, I think this text a strong intimation that baptism is really a sacred service or divine worship, which it is utterly unallowable for any creature to assume or admit. Therefore the good apostle renounces it, with a noble kind of detestation; much like the angel, who, when John offered to fall at his feet, and do him homage, cries, Ορα μη τω Θεω προσκυνησον, Rev. xxii. 9.

The apostolical benediction is another passage usually, and deservedly, produced in justification of our practice. Mr Tomkins alleges, "That this is very different from a direct address by way of prayer to the Spirit," (page 17.) It seems to me to be an undoubted prayer, and to have the very same force as if it had been expressed in the more common precatory form: O Lord Jesus Christ, vouchsafe them thy grace; O God of goodness, grant them thy love; O eternal Spirit, accompany them with thy comfortable presence. That this is the purport of the words, is undeniable: and where is the extraordinary difference, whether they be introduced by an *esto* or a *fac?* I believe all will allow the form ordained by God (Numb. vi. 24—26.) for the use of the Jewish priests, was a real prayer: The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make his face to shine upon thee

and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace! If this was an address to the Almighty, the apostolical benediction is exactly of the same nature. To say, that it was only a kind of wish, and not designed for a devout aspiration to Jehovah, must greatly debase and enervate it; not to hint, that this sacerdotal blessing contained a recognition of three divine persons, which might be obscure in that age, but has been fully illustrated by the apostles; not to hint the probability, that St Paul had this very passage in his eye, when he breathed out his benedictive prayer, and purposely intended to explain it in the evangelical sense. Besides, I would desire to know, whether any minister could, with a safe conscience, use the following benediction? The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Virgin Mary, be with you all, amen! Why should a conscientious minister be afraid of using such a form, if it be no prayer? if it be not a virtual ascription of omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence to the Virgin, and, in consequence of those attributes, a supplicatory address to her? Still we are encountered with another objection, "If I should say to a friend, May the good angels attend you; shall this be called a praying to the angels?" Mr Tomkins himself must own, if he will deal fairly, that the case is by no means parallel. The elect angels disavow all divine worship; but does the Holy Ghost do this? The elect angels are ministering spirits; but of the Holy Ghost it is said, The Lord is that Spirit. The angels are confessedly created and finite beings, so that it would be absurdity and blasphemy to invocate them; but the Holy Ghost is possessed of the perfections, performs the works, and is called by the incommunicable name of God, so that it is wisdom and piety to pray to him. For which reasons, I make no doubt but that, whenever the apostles put up such an ejaculation, η κοινωνια του αγιου Πνευματος μετα παντων υμων, they accompanied it with a devout mental address

to the uncreated Spirit; because it would be a piece of irreverence and folly, barely to wish the mercy, and not apply to that ever-present Being for its accomplishment.

As for the other arguments which Dr Watts advances in order to vindicate the custom of ascribing praise to the Holy Ghost, viz. "That it may be expedient to practise it frequently in some churches, where it has been long used, lest great offence should be given:"—"That it may be proper to use it sometimes, on purpose to hold forth the doctrine of the Trinity in times of error, and to take away all suspicion of heresy from the public worship:" These considerations I leave to the Doctor. I have no inclination to try my skill at such weapons, but chuse to act with regard to them as David acted in relation to Saul's armour; because I really think that they rather encumber than uphold the cause: They are so unwarily worded, that they represent the practice not as a noble essential piece of divine worship, founded on the strongest and most invariable principles, always suitable to our necessities, and always correspondent to the nature of the blessed Spirit; but as an occasional and time-serving expedient, to be used, not constantly, but now and then only; and that to answer a turn none of the most important—to avoid not any real deficiency in worship, but only a suspicion of heresy. Wherever I am solicitous to secure the conclusion, I would by no means offer to deduce it from such unsolid and precarious premises.

I have now examined the most considerable objections urged by Mr Tomkins against the unanimous practice of Christian congregations, whether they conform or dissent. I shall only beg the continuance of your candour and patience, while I touch upon another particular or two, which may farther corroborate our custom, and prove it to be somewhat more than warrantable.

Suppose we produce a command of our Lord Jesus Christ; will this be sufficient to ascertain the

practice? Does not our Saviour give this charge to his apostles, Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest? Matt. ix. 38. Luke x. 2. Now, I would humbly ask, Who the Lord of this spiritual harvest is? Shall we refer ourselves to Scripture for satisfaction? Will Mr Tomkins abide by the determination of Scripture? will he honestly acknowledge, that, if the Scripture declares the Holy Ghost to be the Lord of the harvest, we have then a clear commission, a positive command, to address ourselves by way of prayer to the Holy Ghost? It is the Holy Ghost who appoints the labourers that are to be employed in this harvest: The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them, Acts xiii. 2. and xx. 28. It is the Holy Ghost who qualifies the workmen that are to dispatch this momentous business, with wisdom, with knowledge, with utterance, and with all miraculous abilities, 1 Cor. xii. 8—11. It is the Holy Ghost who makes these labours effectual, and crowns them with ample success, Acts x. 44. 1 Thess. i. 5. From these scriptures, and their testimonies concerning the blessed Spirit, it seems indisputably plain, that he is the Lord of the harvest. Can we have a more forcible motive to pray unto him, than the consideration of his superintending, conducting, and prospering the progress of (that best of blessings) the everlasting gospel? Need we a better warrant to offer our devoutest applications to him than our Lord's express injunction, viewed in connexion with these remarkable texts?

Suppose I prove farther, that the heavenly beings pay divine worship to the Holy Ghost; suppose I shew you angels and archangels in postures of profound adoration at the throne of the eternal Spirit, and glorifying him in strains of the most sublime devotion: Will this be allowed a proper precedent for our practice? will any one be so bold as to affirm, that he is unfit to receive the worship of mortals on

earth, if it appear that he is the object of angelical worship in the heaven of heavens? In the sixth chapter of Isaiah, we meet with one of the grandest representations imaginable: Jehovah exhibits himself to the entranced prophet, seated on a lofty and august throne; before him stood the immortal host of seraphim; they veiled their faces, in token of deepest self-abasement; they lifted up their voices with a rapturous fervour, and uttered this magnificent acclamation, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory. The trisagium of the seraphic armies seems to intimate, that they addressed their praises to the one Jehovah in a trinity of persons. If you look forward to verse 8. you will find another circumstance confirming this remark; for the glorious Majesty speaks of himself in the plural number, Who will go for us? But the proof I chiefly depend on, the proof which is absolutely incontestable, which none can deny, without supposing themselves better judges of the sense of Scripture than the apostles—this proof is found in Acts xxviii. 25. where St Paul evidently applies the words spoken by this majestic and divine Being to the Holy Ghost, Well spake the Holy Ghost, saying. And if he attributes the words to this sacred person, who dares separate the honours? since all must allow, that the person who gives the commission to the prophet, and the person whom the celestial legions adore, is one and the same. Since therefore the angels address the Holy Ghost with solemn acts of praise; since they bear united testimony that the whole earth is full of his glory; Mr Tomkins should consider, whether he acts a becoming part in endeavouring to exclude his glory from any Christian congregation by his example, and from every Christian congregation by his writings.

If Mr Tomkins should still think his own opinion sufficient to overrule all these allegations of Scripture; of greater weight than the practice of St Paul to the Thessalonians; more unexceptionable, and

fitter to be admitted as our pattern, than the example of the angelic host; I cannot but imagine, that the propriety of our custom is apparent, even on the tenor of his own favourite notions. Page 12th, he quotes that grand and fundamental law of revealed religion, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." He proceeds to consider who this Lord our God is, whom we are to serve. He then informs us, "It appears from the whole current of Scripture, in the New Testament as well as the Old, that it is he who, in times past, spake unto the fathers by the prophets." Rightly judged. We make no appeal from this verdict, but acquiesce in it, though it is his own; only taking along with us St Peter's declaration, Prophecy came not in old time (rather at any time, *unquam* not *olim*, ποτε not παλαι) by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, 2 Pet. i. 21. Mr Tomkins himself maintains, that the genuine and undoubted object of divine worship is that infinitely wise and gracious Being who spake to our fathers by the prophets; and St Peter, in the most express manner possible, asserts, that this infinitely wise and gracious Being, who spake by the prophets, is the Holy Ghost. Can demonstration itself be plainer? Sure, then, Mr Tomkins must either retract his position, or disallow the apostle's application of it; or else give us leave to adhere inviolably to our practice, and to look upon it as justifiable beyond all reasonable exception; and, what should carry some peculiar weight with our author, justifiable on principles of his own.

May I urge this point a little farther? I should be glad to know, what is the scriptural meaning of being converted unto the Lord? Is it not to renounce every lying vanity, to forsake every evil way, and to turn to the Lord with all our heart; that we may fear him, love him, put our whole trust in him, and serve him truly all the days of our life? Does not this include some, rather, is it not comprehensive of

all worship? So that if it is certain from Scripture that sinners are to be converted to the Holy Ghost, then it is equally certain that sinners are to pay, not some only, but all worship, to that blessed Being, who is the centre of their souls and the source of their happiness. Be pleased to read attentively 2 Cor. iii. 16, 17. and we dare venture to stand by your decision.

Let me add one more consideration, and I have done. The blessed Spirit is to help our infirmities in prayer, Rom. viii. 26. The Spirit is to subdue our iniquities, and mortify the deeds of the body, Rom. viii. 13. The Spirit is to shed abroad the love of God in our hearts, Rom. v. 5. The Spirit is to sanctify us wholly, in all our faculties, 1 Thess. v. 23. The Spirit is to transform us into the divine image, 2 Cor. iii. 18. The Spirit is to seal us unto the day of redemption, Eph. iv. 30.; and to be the earnest of an incorruptible inheritance, Eph. i. 14. In a word, from the Spirit we are humbly to expect all the fruits of goodness, righteousness, and truth, Eph. v. 9. Now, what a comfortable prospect rises before us, if this Spirit be the all-sufficient, the infinite God, to whom nothing is impossible; who is able to do for us exceeding abundantly, even above all that we can ask or think! But how languid must be our hopes, how scanty our expectations, if he be not the divine Being, but only some finite existence! And, in another state of things, to whom will righteous souls acknowledge themselves inexpressibly indebted, to whom will they return their ardent thanks, and address the most joyful praises, but to the author of these inestimable blessings? If this then is likely to be the employ and the delight of heaven, should it not be begun on earth?

Upon the whole, since the custom of offering prayer and addressing praise to the Holy Ghost, is contrary to no text of Scripture, is founded upon his divine nature, and results from the indispensable obligation of creatures to worship the Godhead:

Since it was undeniably the practice of the Christian church in its purest days, and has been received, by unanimous approbation, for many hundreds of preceding years: Since it is probable, if we will allow their doctrines and conduct to be consistent, it is certain, if we will prefer the most accurate and unembarrassed interpretation of their epistles, that the apostles used this method of worship: Since the analogy of the whole Scripture justifies it, and the innumerable benefits which are communicated to us from the blessed Spirit demand it: Since angels ascribe glory to his awful majesty, and our Saviour directs us to put up prayers to his almighty goodness: These, and other considerations, determine me to join, without the least scruple, with full assurance of its propriety, in that ancient noble doxology, Glory be to the Father, who hath loved us with an everlasting love; and to the Son, who hath washed us from our sins in his own blood; and to the Holy Ghost, who applies these blessings of redeeming grace to our corrupt hearts; to this great, eternal, incomprehensible Trinity, be rendered undivided honours, and immortal praise!

Having been so very prolix already, I shall not render myself more tedious by making any apology; but shall only add, what no consideration can induce me to omit, that I am, dear sir, your obliged friend, &c.

LETTER XXX.

Weston-Favell, March 1745-6.

DEAR SIR,—YOU have set me a task, which I should be glad to execute, if I was able. God forbid that I should be backward to plead for the interests of that Redeemer on earth, who, I trust, is making perpetual intercession for me in heaven. But my fear is, lest the noble cause should suffer by the unskilfulness of its defendant. It is for this reason, purely for this reason, I wish to decline

accepting the challenge you seem to give me in your letter. For this once, however, I will enter the lists, and venture to try the strength, not of your arm, but of your arguments.

I do not wonder that you have objections to make against Christianity. I know some eminent Christians who were formerly warm and zealous in the opposition; yet they have frankly owned, that their minds were then either very inconsiderate, or else immersed in other speculations; and that they had no leisure, or no inclination, to weigh the evidences and examine the nature of the evangelical doctrine. Since they have applied themselves to consider these points with a seriousness and attention becoming an inquiry of the last importance, an inquiry in which their very souls and all their eternal interests were embarked, they are thoroughly convinced that their former sentiments were wrong. They are fully persuaded, that the gospel institution is of divine extract; that it is a system, noble and sublime, benevolent and gracious, every way suitable to the majesty of God, and admirably calculated for the comfort, the improvement, and the happiness of mankind.

Methinks you will reply, and very reasonably, "That all such should be able to account for the change of their opinions." I dare say they can. But as you call on me so particularly to vindicate the religious principles which I have from my infancy embraced, I will now attempt to vindicate them from the various charges of which they stand arraigned in your letter.

Be pleased then, dear sir, to observe that the Christian doctrine teaches, that when God brought man into being, he blessed him with a state perfectly holy and happy. If you read the Bible, the authentic narrative of our fall, as well as the only guide to our recovery, you will find it an avowed truth, that God made man upright. If, therefore, man corrupted himself, and (as it is impossible to bri

clean thing out of an unclean) polluted his offspring; where is the harshness, where the injustice, of the divine procedure in adjudging him worthy of death? Let God be justified, and let mortals bear the blame.

You think it very odd, that this tragical catastrophe should be occasioned by eating an apple. So should I too, was there nothing more in the case than barely eating an apple. But this was a wilful and presumptuous breach of a most positive command, of the only command which the almighty Lawgiver enjoined. And the smaller the matter of the prohibition, the more inexcusable was the fault of not complying with it. In this act of disobedience was implied—the most perverse discontent in the happiest circumstances imaginable; the most shameful ingratitude for the most inestimable favours; pride and arrogance, even to an unsufferable degree; implicit blasphemy, making God a liar, and hearkening to the suggestions of the devil, in preference to the solemn declarations of truth itself. Indeed, this transgression was a complication of iniquities; and, though represented under the extenuating terms of eating an apple, was really the most horrid provocation that was ever committed.

But that the transgression of Adam should fasten guilt, or transmit corruption to his latest posterity, this, you imagine, is all a chimera. If then you was created in a perfect state; if you suffered nothing by the original lapse, why is your heart prone to numberless evils? why do you tread in the steps of an apostate ancestor? why do you violate the law of an infinitely pure God, and too often delight in that abominable and accursed thing which he hateth—sin? You are too honest and ingenuous to deny the truth of these expostulations. And if so, you must allow that your nature was depraved in Adam, or, which seems to be more culpable, that you have corrupted yourself. Then, there is no such great cause to find fault with the supreme Disposer of things for including you in Adam's trespass, since you yourself do the same things.

Is it consistent, you ask, with the character of an infinitely good Being, to make this resolve, That he would, on account of this single crime, bring into existence almost innumerable millions of creatures, so spoiled by himself, that they should all deserve eternal damnation? I answer, this is entirely a misrepresentation of the Christian scheme. It was not in consequence of the original crime that God determined to bring the human race into being, but in pursuance of his own eternal purposes, which are always the issue of consummate wisdom, of unbounded benevolence, and will, unless his creatures stubbornly reject the overtures of his love, terminate in their unspeakable felicity. Neither was the human race spoiled by the Creator, but by themselves. To suppose that the Author of all excellence should deprave the work of his own hands, is doubtless a shocking thought, and such as we utterly disavow. So far was he from being the sole operator, that he was not so much as accessary in any degree to their misery: but warned them of their danger; charged them to beware; and planted the barrier of his own tremendous threatenings between them and ruin.

You are displeased, that everlasting happiness should never be attainable by any of these creatures, but by those few to whom God gives his effectual free grace. If the proposition be set in another light, which is really the true method of stating it; if we say, That, though all have forfeited, yet all may recover everlasting happiness, because effectual grace is freely offered to all; what can a man of candour object to such a dispensation? Will he not acknowledge the goodness of the divine procedure, and inveigh against the perverseness of mortals; the most unreasonable perverseness of all those, who are too proud to be sensible of their want of grace, or too careless to trouble their heads about it? Will he not be constrained to declare them suicides, and that they are chargeable, if they perish, with their own destruction? If we prescribe a medicine of sov-

reign efficacy, and the sick is so self-willed as to refuse the recipe, who is to be blamed in case of a miscarriage—the physician or the patient?

When, therefore, you talk of persons being unavoidably damned, you quite misconceive the tenor of our most merciful and benign institution; which offers forgiveness to all, though ever so profligate, through the Saviour's atonement; which makes a tender of grace to all, though ever so abandoned, through the Saviour's mediation. The language, the most compassionate language of which is, Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will you die? And because the sinner, enslaved to vice, is unable to shake off the fetters, it farther says, Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find grace sufficient for you.

As to the meaning of the term *grace*, I apprehend it signifies the pardon of obnoxious, and the acceptance of unworthy persons, on account of the expiation and merits of the Redeemer. It imports also a communication of knowledge and strength to ignorant and impotent creatures, that they may discern their Creator's will, and discerning, may be enabled to perform it. And in forming these ideas, I can see nothing stupid; in expecting these blessings, nothing foolish.

But still, perhaps, you think it scarce reconcileable with the wisdom, the justice, the mercy of God, to suffer mankind to fall. That he foresaw it, and could have prevented it, is undeniable. He foresaw it, or else he could not be omniscient: he was able to have prevented it, otherwise he could not be omnipotent. But what if the eternal Maker knew, that this would give occasion to the most ample and glorious manifestation of those very attributes which you suspect are eclipsed hereby? Would this conciliate your approbation? would this incline you to acquiesce in the economy of the gospel?

Certainly it is a most stupendous discovery of wisdom to find out a method, whereby the seemingly

jarring attributes of justice and mercy may be reconciled; whereby the sinner may be saved, without any injury to the inviolable holiness of his laws, or any derogation to the honour of his just and righteous government. It was impossible to give such an amazing proof of his infinite kindness for poor mortals, as by delivering his own Son to take their inferior nature, and bear all their guilt. Nor can there be so signal an exertion of justice, as to punish this most excellent Person when he stood in the place of offenders; or of mercy, as to divert the vengeance from their obnoxious to his immaculate and innocent head.

As from the scheme of redemption the highest glory redounds to the divine majesty, so the richest consolation is derived from hence to frail creatures. The happiness of men consists in the favour of God. His love is better than life. To be graciously regarded by that adorable Being, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth; to be the objects of his complacency, whose smile constitutes heaven and whose frown is worse than destruction; this, this is human felicity. And how could God Almighty give us a brighter evidence, a more pregnant proof of his inconceivably tender concern for us, than by surrendering his only Son to condemnation and death for our sake? Transporting thought! big with a delight which man could never have known had not Adam fallen. This obviates an objection on which you strongly insist, That you and others never consented to make Adam your representative. For if this method of ordering things be productive of a superior felicity to all that are willing to be happy, then it can be no wrong to the world in general, or to any individual person in particular; no more than it is a wrong to the minor, for his guardians to procure interest for his money, and improve his estate against the time of his coming to age.

Upon the whole, there is no reason to quar

with that sovereign will of God which permitted us to fall in Adam, from thence to contract guilt, to derive pollution, and consequently to deserve damnation: But rather, there is abundant cause to admire, to adore, to bless his holy name, for providing a Redeemer; a Redeemer of unknown dignity, and unutterable perfection; a Redeemer, by whom all the evils of the fall may be more than redressed; a Redeemer, in whom all the awful and amiable attributes of the Deity are most illustriously displayed; a Redeemer, through whom the most wicked and most unfortunate of our race may find mercy and arrive at happiness; a Redeemer, who most compassionately invites all, all that are weary and heavy laden, to come to him, and most assuredly declares, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. And is it not strange, very strange, hardly credible, sure, that any should reject so great salvation, and chuse death rather than life?

Let me beg of you, sir, to consider these points with calmness and impartiality. You cannot but be sensible, that many learned, many wise, many excellent persons most cordially believe them; receive their chief satisfactions from them, and would rather die than renounce them. Since it is possible, at least, that they may be in the right; since you do not pretend to be infallible in your judgment; and since you acknowledge a God of unerring wisdom, and everlasting goodness; let me beseech you to implore his guidance in your search, and his direction in your determination. For I am not ashamed to own, or rather I am bold to maintain, that this wisdom cometh from above; this wisdom is the gift of God; and prayer is altogether as necessary to its attainment, as sagacity of mind, or the accomplishments of learning.

LETTER XXXI.

Weston-Favell, Nov. 1. 1746.

DEAR SIR,—THIS morning I received your favour. The day lowers, and threatens rain, which debars me from the pleasure of paying you my thanks in person.

Mr Huygens I hope to read very carefully. But, I believe, it will be proper to take heed of adopting into my plan any notions that are difficult and abstruse. I would have every thing so perspicuous, that the dimmest understanding may apprehend my meaning; so obvious, that he who runs may read. Let me lay before you a little sketch of my design, with a request that you would alter the general order, and make retrenchments, or additions of particular incidents, as you shall think most expedient.

A contemplative walk. The approach of evening, and gradual extinction of light. The advantages of solitude. The stillness of the universe. The coolness of the atmosphere. Darkness, and its usefulness to mankind. Sleep, and its beneficial effects. Dreams, and their extravagance. A glow-worm glimmering. An owl shrieking. A nightingale singing. The very different circumstances of mankind: some revelling and carousing; some agonizing and dying. A knell sounding. The notion of ghosts walking. The moon, with its various appearances, and serviceableness to our globe: the heavenly bodies; their number, size, courses, distances, display many of the glorious attributes of their Creator; some of which are specified. They teach nothing of redemption; this the peculiar prerogative of revelation. Christ the day-star from on high, that points out and makes clear the way of salvation.

These are some of the subjects which, I imagined, might be admitted into the composition of a night-piece. If others occur to your mind more pleasing, or more striking, be pleased to suggest them.

I am glad to find, by the quotation from Mr Locke, that your esteem and veneration for the Scriptures are on the increasing hand. May we be persuaded, ever more and more, of the incomparable excellency of those sacred volumes. This one consideration, that they are the book of God, is a higher recommendation of them than could be displayed in ten thousand panegyric orations. For my part, I purpose to addict myself, with more incessant assiduity, to this delightful and divine study. Away, my Homer; I have no more need of being entertained by you, since Job and the Prophets furnish me with images much more magnificent, and lessons infinitely more important. Away, my Horace; nor shall I suffer any loss by your absence, while the sweet singer of Israel tunes his lyre, and charms me with the finest flights of fancy, and inspirits me with the noblest strains of devotion. And even my prime favourite, my Virgil, may withdraw; since in Isaiah I enjoy all his majesty of sentiment, all his correctness of judgment, all his beautiful propriety of diction, and—But I must have done. The messenger waits; he can stay no longer than barely to allow me leisure to subscribe myself, dear sir, &c.

LETTER XXXII.

Weston-Favell, Nov. 29. 1746.

Dear Sir,—Having taken cold, and got a hoarseness, I am afraid to venture abroad, lest I should lose my voice, and be incapable of performing the duty of the morrow.

If any method is agreed upon by the committee, for endeavouring, in some more effectual manner, to promote the spiritual recovery, and everlasting welfare of the infirmary patients, I wish you would be so kind as to inform me of it in a letter; that if any part of this generous undertaking should fall to my share, I may address myself to the prosecution of it, with all the ability which the Divine Goodness shall

vouchsafe to communicate. Or, if there be no need of my concurrence, that I may accompany it with my best wishes, and, at least, further it with my prayers. Who am, &c.

LETTER XXXIII.

My very dear Friend,—Your last found me on the recovering hand, getting strength and spirits, though by slow degrees.

Soon after I received your favour, a messenger came from London, bringing us the alarming news, that my youngest brother was extremely ill. My father's bowels yearned, and his heart bled; but the infirmities of age, and an unwieldy constitution, hindered him from taking the journey. Upon me, therefore, the office fell. Feeble and languid as I was, there was no rejecting such a call. Accordingly I took coach, and in two days arrived safe at London, where I found my poor brother (the packer) seized with a most violent fever. He was attended by two eminent physicians; but they proved vain helpers, and miserable comforters. For a considerable time his stout constitution struggled with the disease, but at last was forced to yield, was forced to drop in the dreadful combat. After attending his sick-bed for several days, I had the melancholy task of closing his dear eyes, and resigning him up to death.

Oh! the uncertainty of mortal things! What is health but a glimmering taper, that expires while it shines, and is liable to be extinguished by every motion of the air? What is strength, but a tender blossom, that is often withered in its fullest bloom; often blasted, even before it is blown? Who could have thought that I should survive my brother, and follow him to the grave? I, sickly and enervated, he always lively and vigorous: In flourishing circumstances, and blessed with prosperity in his business; but now removed to the dark, inactive, silent tomb:

Lately married to a beautiful and blooming bride; but now everlastingly divorced, and a companion for creeping things.

Scarce was I returned to Weston, but another awful providence fetched me from home. My very worthy physician, Dr Stonehouse, who lives and practises at Northampton, had the misfortune to lose an amiable and excellent wife. She also was snatched away in the morning of life (aged 25), and dead before I so much as heard of her being disordered. At this valuable friend's house I was desired to abide some time, in order to assist in writing letters for him, and dispatching his necessary affairs; in comforting him concerning the deceased; and (if the will of God be so) in endeavouring to improve the awakening visitation to our mutual good.

You will surely say, when you read this account, that I have been in deaths oft. Once upon the borders of it myself, and more than once a spectator of its victory over others. However, my dear friends, let us not be dismayed. Let no man's, at least no believer's, heart fail, because of this king of terrors. Though thousands fall beside us, though ten thousands expire at our right hand, and though we ourselves must quickly give up the ghost; yet the word is gone out of our great Redeemer's mouth, and it shall not return unfulfilled,—I will swallow up death in victory. He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: he shall say to the grave, Give up; and to the sea, Keep not back; release my sons from your dark confinement, and restore my daughters to their everlasting Father's arms. Then shall we lead him captive whose captives we were, and triumph eternally over this last enemy. In the mean time, let us lay all our help, all our guilt, upon the divine Author of our faith, and Captain of our salvation. So shall we no longer be in bondage, through fear of death; but, with the saints of old, overcome through the blood of the Lamb; overcome the dread, even while we sink beneath the stroke of this our mortal foe.

What I wrote concerning a firm faith in God's most precious promises, and an humble trust that we are the objects of his tender love, is what I desire to feel, rather than what I actually experience. Considerations they are, with which I would ply my own heart, in hopes that they may be effectually set home by divine grace, in hopes that they may become the happy means of making me strong in faith, and enabling me thereby to give glory to God.

Your remarks on this important point are exceedingly judicious, and perfectly right. After which, it will be insignificant to my friend, and look like arrogance in his correspondent, to add, that they exactly coincide with my sentiments.

I do not doubt but there are many dear children of the blessed God, who are in a much better condition, with regard to his favour, than they can easily be persuaded to believe. Many sincerely righteous, for whom light is sown; many true hearted, for whom joyful gladness is prepared: which, though latent in the furrows of inward tribulation, or oppressed under the clods of misgiving fears, shall, in another world, spring up with infinite increase, and yield an everlasting harvest.

That humble hope, mixed with trembling, you have very pathetically described, in the breathings of a renewed soul panting after God; languishing for the tokens of his love; ardently desiring the final enjoyment of him in his heavenly kingdom; and relying wholly on the meritorious passion, pleading nothing but the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. Happy, without all peradventure, happy the heart, in which such affections habitually prevail. They are the beginning of heaven, and will certainly be completed in glory. They constitute a signal part of that meetness for the inheritance of saints in light, concerning which the apostle speaks, and which is one of the surest evidences of our designation to that purchased possession. Christ will in no wise, on no consideration of past provocation or present corrup-

tion, either for weakness of faith or want of confidence, cast out such a one. Let not such a one question, but he who has begun the good work will accomplish it even unto the end.

We should, however, as you most pertinently observe, lament all the remains of unbelief as a misery; repent of them as a sin; and labour to obtain a more assured faith, both as our duty and our felicity. The direction for prayer, you know, is, that we draw near in full assurance of faith: and, whatsoever things ye ask in prayer, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. The Thessalonians are commended for receiving the gospel with much assurance of faith. Receiving the gospel! What is meant by that expression? Believing that the apostles were no impostors; that Jesus Christ was the true Messiah; and that his doctrine came from heaven? This, and abundantly more, I apprehend, it implies, That Christ died, not for sins only in general, but for their sins in particular; that he bore all their iniquities, in his own bleeding body and agonizing soul, on the cursed tree; that all their crimes being fully expiated, the most rigorous justice would not demand a double payment for the same debt; and consequently that there remained no condemnation for them. This is the glad tidings, which they not only attended to, and credited with a speculative assent; but with a personal application of it, each to his particular case. And why should not we do the very same? I shall only subjoin further on this head, what I take to be a very clear and accurate explanation of the apostle's celebrated definition of faith: Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen; putting us into a kind of present possession of the promises, and setting divine truths before the mind in all the light and power of demonstration. For this beautiful illustration of the inspired writer, I am obliged to an excellent clergyman of this neighbourhood; who lately favoured us with an admirable visitation sermon, and, for the

good of the public, was prevailed on to print it. You will give me leave to close the topic with a distinction which I have somewhere read, or on some occasion heard; a distinction which I think properly adjusts the case under consideration, and settles it, neither on a precarious nor a discouraging issue. Many have the faith which bringeth salvation, who have not that faith which produceth assurance; but none have the former, who do not aspire after, and endeavour to possess the latter.

On the whole, I heartily beseech the adorable and infinitely gracious Giver of every perfect gift, to establish, strengthen, settle us in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ; that he would fulfil in us all the good pleasure of his will, and the work of faith with power. And I dare say, we shall often lift up our hearts to our heavenly Father, and breathe out that ardent petition, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief! If we have such frequent recourse to the overflowing and inexhaustible fountain of all good; if we add to our prayers meditation on the merits of Jesus, and on the sure word of promise,—our faith will grow; the grain of mustard-seed will be quickened, and shoot up into a tree; the little drop will become a stream, and the stream spread into a river. The waters that issued from the sanctuary were, at first, deep to the ancles only; then they arose to the knees; soon they reached the loins; and were afterwards waters to swim in.

The Contemplations you are pleased to inquire after are, after long delays, or a very slow procedure of the press, launched into the world. What may be their fate, I dare not conjecture. Whether, by the general disapprobation, they may be unfortunately becalmed; or, by the severity of critics, may split on the rocks of censure; or, foundering through their own unworthiness, may sink in oblivion; or, blessed by a gracious Providence, may gain the haven of public acceptance, and import those valuable commodities, pleasure which improves, and im-

provement which delights. When they reach your parts, be so good, dear sir, as to peruse them, first with the humble child-like spirit of a Christian, who seeks religious advantage in all that he reads. Next, with the candid rigour of a friend, saying, as you proceed, Here his thoughts are redundant, and want the pruning-knife; there they are deficient, and call for the grafter's hand; here the language is obscure, and perspicuity is the only remedy; there it is inexpressive, and must be rendered more nervous, in order to reach the judgment or strike the passions. Above all, let me beg of you to implore a blessing from the most high God, both upon the author and his piece; that the one may be a monument of divine mercy, the other a polished shaft in the great Immanuel's quiver.

Should not a sense of his love make us more ardently desirous of bringing others to partake of that everlasting bliss, which we humbly expect as our final portion; and of which some foretastes have been indulged even in our present state? Should we not be stirred up with greater assiduity and love, to warn every man, and exhort every man, that they also may be presented perfect in Christ, and live for ever in the light of his countenance? The book I mentioned formerly, and took leave to recommend, shall be sent. I have set it apart as a present for my dear friend; and whether my life be prolonged, or my death hastened, neither of these circumstances shall make any alteration in my design. Only let me desire you, in your next, to give me once more the proper directions for conveying it to you; for, some way or other, in my late unsettled state, I have mislaid your letter. Please to present my thanks to Mrs —— for her kind wishes; and tell her, that they are, and shall be most cordially returned by her and your most faithful and affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER XXXIV.

Weston-Favell, Feb. 28. 1747.

DEAR SIR,—I HAVE read the ingenious gentleman's letter attentively. Though he says the strongest things that can be urged upon the point, I still adhere to my sentiments; and not because they are mine, but the Scripture's, and supportable, I am persuaded, by a variety of texts from the oracles of truth. I beg leave to waive the prosecution of the controversy. Controversy is what I naturally dislike, and what I have seldom found advantageous. I know his opinion, and he has given me an opportunity of declaring mine; and would only add, that if in any thing we be otherwise minded (than is consistent with the gospel of grace), God (upon a diligent application to his word, and humble prayer for the teaching of his Spirit) will reveal this unto us, Phil. iii. 15.

I have been reading Mr Baxter's Saint's Everlasting Rest, and admire the copiousness, the justness, and the devotion of his thoughts. How happy the soul that, while reading them, can make them his own! May this be always the prevailing desire, and, in due time, the heaven-vouchsafed portion of the worthy owner of the book, and of his most affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER XXXV.

Weston-Favell, Feb. 1747.

DEAR SIR,—I HAVE heard nothing from my printer during all this interval. What can be the reason of his long silence, and great negligence, I cannot imagine. But this week it occurred to my mind, that if he delays the second edition at this rate, I may possibly be able to prepare the third letter to accompany it. Accordingly, I have postponed other business, and applied wholly to this work. I have

transcribed some part of the intended piece, and send it for your perusal. Pray be so good as to examine it narrowly, and favour me with your remarks and improvements, on a separate paper. There are, I fear, besides more material faults, several mistakes in the copy, owing to my want of leisure to review it. I suppose the remainder of my design, when completed, will consist of about the same number of pages.

If I live till Monday, I propose to visit my patient at the infirmary; and, if company happens to be agreeable, will take the pleasure of spending an hour with a certain valuable and very much esteemed friend at Northampton. If you are not able to guess the person I mean, you shall soon be informed by, dear sir, yours, &c.

Vir bonus et prudens versus reprehendet inertes,
Culpabit duros, incomptis allinet atrum
Transverso calamo signum, ambitioso recidet
Ornamenta, parum claris lucem dare coget,
Arguet ambigue dictum, mutando notabit.—HORACE.

This I transcribe, not to inform you of the critic's office, but only to apprize you of what I wish, and what I humbly request.

LETTER XXXVI.

Weston-Favell, April 12. 1747.

DEAR SIR,—I HAVE folded down a corner of the leaf at the place where your perusal left off. There is a note or two subjoined to the preceding pages, which I wish you would please to examine. My humble service to Dr ——. I desire he will write his remarks and corrections on a separate paper. What think you of the following lines for a motto?

Night opes the noblest scenes, and sheds an awe
Which gives those venerable scenes full weight,
And deep impression on the intender'd heart.
NIGHT THOUGHTS.

——Si quid novisti rectius istis,
Candidus imperti.

Your plan for forming a Christian society, and regulating our interviews, I greatly approve. It seems to me to be complete. I see nothing that should be taken from it, nor can think of any thing to be added to it. I heartily wish to have it carried into execution, and hope it will be productive of considerable comfort and advantage to the members; and not to them only, but, by rendering them more useful in their respective stations, to many others.

A cold, and hoarseness on my voice, make me somewhat fearful of coming to —— this day. I hope you have perused the remainder of the manuscript; and cannot but wish you would give the whole a second reading. The unknown importance of what we print, inclines me to urge this request. Who can tell how long it may continue, and into what hands it may come? I almost tremble at such a thought, lest I should write unadvisedly with my pen, and injure instead of serving the best of causes.

If you have put my little piece into the hands of my Aristarchus, Dr —— I mean, desire him to be particularly attentive to the redundancies, and lop them off with a plentiful hand.

I shall soon create you a second task, by transmitting for your correction twenty folio pages of remarks on the stars, and serious improvements.—Yours, &c.

LETTER XXXVII.

Weston-Favell, June 27. 1747.

My dear Friend,—Coming home this evening, I could not forbear musing on the various topics which furnished matter for our discourse; and now I am all thoughtful and retired, I cannot forbear taking notice of some particulars relating to our conversation. To be silent in such a case, would, I am persuaded, be more displeasing to a gentleman of your discernment and generosity, than to use the utmost freedom of speech.

Was it you, dear sir, or I, that, when a certain passage in Scripture happened to be mentioned, treated it, not indeed with a contemptuous disdain, but with too ludicrous an air? descanted on it in a sportive and frolicsome manner, in order to create a little pleasantry? If I was the person that indulged this improper levity, I beseech you to rebuke me, and severely too. Though my design might be innocent, my conduct was apparently wrong. That infinitely precious and important book should be always held in the highest veneration. Whatever the divine Spirit vouchsafes to dictate, should be thought and spoke of by mortals, with gratitude, dutifulness, and awe. It is the character of a religious man, that he trembles at God's word! and it is said of the great Jehovah, that he has magnified his name and his word above all things.

Who was it, dear sir, that lent to our valuable friend that vile book, Le Sopha, and yet wrote by Crebillon, with an enchanting spirit of elegance; which must render the mischief palatable, and the bane even delicious? I wonder that your kind and benevolent heart could recommend arsenic for a regale. It puts me in mind of the impoisoned shirt presented to Hercules. I am sure you did not think on it, or else you would no more have transmitted such a pestilent treatise to the perusal of a friend, than you would transmit to him a packet of goods from a country depopulated by the plague. If that polluting French book still remains in your study, let me beg of you to make it perform quarantine in the flames.

The last particular relates to attendance on the public worship of God. Let us not neglect the assembling ourselves together. This was the advice of the best and greatest casuist in the world; not to say, the injunction of the Maker of all things, and Judge of all men. Would we be assured of our love to God? This is one evidence of that most noble and happy temper,—Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy

house, and the place where thy honour dwelleth. Would we glorify the Lord? Then let us appear in his courts, fall low on our knees before his footstool, and in this public manner avow him for our God, recognize him for our King, and acknowledge him to be our Supreme Good. Would we follow the example of our devout and blessed Master? Let us remember how it is written, Jesus went into the synagogue, as his custom was. And, if we take due care to get our hearts prepared, by a little previous meditation and earnest prayer, I dare answer for it, our attendance will not be in vain in the Lord. God will, according to his promise, meet us in his ordinances; make us joyful in his house of prayer; and we shall experience what (if I remember right) that brightest ornament of the court of judicature, Judge Hales, declared, That he never sat under the preaching, even of the meanest sermon, but he found some word of edification, exhortation, or comfort.

Dear sir, bestow a thought on these things. If the remonstrances are wrong, I willingly retract them; if right, you will not pronounce me impertinent. Love and friendship dictate what I write; and the only end I have in view, is the holiness, the usefulness, the happiness, the final salvation of my much esteemed friend. It is for this, this only, I have now taken my pen in hand, and for this I shall often bend my knees before God, and thereby prove myself to be, dear sir, &c.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Weston-Favell, July 18. 1747.

Dear Sir,—I desire you to accept my thanks for the variety of beautiful lines which you sent me to chuse a motto from. They are all elegant, but not sufficiently expressive of the design of the piece. Therefore I imagined the following quotation from Dr Young somewhat more suitable:—

Night is fair virtue's immemorial friend;
The conscious moon, through every distant age,
Has held a lamp to wisdom.

You advised me to add a sort of note to the passage objected to by Mr ——, relating to the spark's being visible. In pursuance of your direction I subjoined the following:—

"I beg leave to inform the young gentleman, whose name dignifies my dedication, that this was a remark of his worthy father, when we rode together, and conversed in a dusky evening. I mention this circumstance, partly to secure the paragraph from contempt, partly to give him, and the world, an idea of that eminently serious taste which distinguished my worthy friend. The less obvious the reflection, the more clearly it discovers a turn of mind remarkably spiritual, which would suffer nothing to escape without yielding some spiritual improvement. And the meaner the incident, the more admirable was that fertility of imagination, which could deduce the noblest truths from the most trivial occurrences."

Will not this be looked upon as a sly underhand artifice whereby the author extols himself?

Does the famous Dutch philosopher, Nieuentyt (I think is his name), treat of the heavenly bodies? If he does, be so good, in case he dwells in your study, to send him on a week's visit to me. Dr Watt's treatise on astronomy I should be glad to peruse.

The Hymn to the Moon, whoever is meant by Scriblerus Decimus Maximus, is very poetical. I durst not venture to add what is wanting to render it a complete address, lest it should become like the visionary image, whose head was of gold, his feet of iron and clay.

My transient remarks on Dr Rymer's Representation of Revealed Religion are lost. I must desire leave to postpone my observations on the other books.—I am, dear sir, &c.

LETTER XXXIX.

Weston-Favell, Aug. 8. 1747.

DEAR SIR,—AFTER my thanks for what passed in yesterday's interview, give me leave to add my acknowledgments for the perusal of your poem entitled The Deity. It is a noble piece, quite poetical, truly evangelical, and admirably fitted to alarm and comfort the heart, to delight and improve the reader. I must desire to read it again.

I visited the poor condemned malefactor; found him an ignorant person; aimed chiefly at these two grand points, to convince him of the heinousness of his sin, and shew him the all-sufficiency of the Saviour to obtain pardon even for the very vilest of offenders. To preach and teach Jesus Christ, is our office; to make the doctrine effectual, God's great prerogative. Nothing more occurs, but that I am, &c.

LETTER XL.

Weston-Favell, Aug. 8. 1747.

DEAREST MR ——, I OUGHT to take shame to myself, for suffering so kind a letter, received from so valuable a friend, to remain so long unanswered. Upon no other consideration than that of my enfeebled and languishing constitution, can I excuse myself, or hope for your pardon. My health is continually upon the decline, and the springs of life are all relaxing. Mine age is departing, and removing from me as a shepherd's tent. Medicine is baffled; and my physician, Dr Stonehouse, who is a dear friend to his patient, and a lover of the Lord Jesus, pities, but cannot succour me. This blessing, however, together with a multitude of others, the divine goodness vouchsafes to gild the gloom of decaying nature, that I am racked with no pain, and enjoy the free undisturbed exercise of my understanding.

I am much obliged to you for carrying my message to the Abbey with so much speed, and conveying to me with equal dispatch a satisfactory answer. When you visit the worthy family again, be pleased, after presenting my affectionate compliments, and most cordial good wishes, to inform Mrs ——, that the piece is sent to the press, and after some corrections made in the dedication, addressed to my godson. It is my humble request to him, and my earnest prayer to God, that he may regard it, not merely as a complimentary form, but as the serious and pathetic advice of his father's intimate acquaintance, and his soul's sincere friend; who, in all probability, will be cut off from every other opportunity of fulfilling his sacred engagements, and admonishing him of whatever a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health.

I forgot whether I told you, that the last work will be divided into two parts; will be full as large as the two first letters; and therefore the whole will be disposed into two small pocket volumes, on a very neat paper, with an elegant type, in duodecimo. But a convenient number of the new essays will be printed in the octavo size and character, for the satisfaction of those who purchased the former edition, and may possibly be willing to complete their book. It was a considerable time before I could think of a title for the last pieces, that suited their nature, and expressed their design. At length I have determined to style them Contemplations on the Night, and Contemplations on the Starry Heavens.

Now I apprehend myself to be near the close of life, and stand, as it were, on the brink of the grave, with eternity full in my view, perhaps my dear friend would be glad to know my sentiments of things in this awful situation. At such a juncture, the mind is most unprejudiced, and the judgment not so liable to be dazzled by the glitter of worldly objects.

I think, then, dear sir, that we are extremely mistaken, and sustain a mighty loss in our most impor-

tant interests, by reading so much, and praying so little. Was I to enjoy Hezekiah's grant, and have fifteen years added to my life, I would be much more frequent in my applications to the throne of grace. I have read of a person who was often retired and on his knees, was remarkable for his frequency and fervency in devotion; being asked the reason of this so singular a behaviour, he replied, Because I am sensible I must die. I assure you, dear Mr ——, I feel the weight of this answer, I see the wisdom of this procedure; and, was my span to be lengthened, would endeavour always to remember the one, and daily to imitate the other.

I think also we fail in our duty, and thwart our comfort, by studying God's holy word no more. I have, for my part, been too fond of reading every thing elegant and valuable that has been penned in our own language; and been particularly charmed with the historians, orators, and poets of antiquity. But was I to renew my studies, I would take my leave of those accomplished trifles. I would resign the delights of modern wit, amusement, and eloquence, and devote my attention to the Scriptures of truth. I would sit with much greater assiduity at my divine Master's feet, and desire to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified. This wisdom, whose fruits are peace in life, consolation in death, and everlasting salvation after death; this I would trace, this I would seek, this I would explore, through the spacious and delightful fields of the Old and New Testament. In short, I would adopt the apostle's resolution, Acts vi. 4. and give myself to prayer, and to the word.

With regard to my public ministry, my chief aim should be, to beget in my people's minds a deep sense of their depraved, guilty, undone condition; and a clear believing conviction of the all-sufficiency of Christ, by his blood, his righteousness, his intercession, and his Spirit, to save them to the uttermost. I would always observe to labour for them

in my closet, as well as in the pulpit; and wrestle in secret supplication, as well as to exert myself in public preaching, for their spiritual and eternal welfare. For unless God take this work into his own hand, what mortal is sufficient for these things?

Now, perhaps, if you sat at my right hand, you would ask, What is my hope with regard to my future and immortal state? Truly my hope, my whole hope, is even in the Lord Redeemer. Should the king of terrors threaten—I fly to the wounds of the slaughtered Lamb, as the trembling dove to the clefts of the rock. Should Satan accuse—I plead the Surety of the covenant, who took my guilt upon himself, and bore my sins in his own body on the tree. Should the law denounce a curse—I appeal to him who hung on the accursed tree, on purpose that all the nations of the earth might be blessed. Should hell open its jaws, and demand its prey—I look up to that gracious Being who says, Deliver him from going down into the pit, for I have found a ransom. Should it be said, No unclean thing can enter into heaven; my answer is,—The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin: though my sins be as scarlet, through his blood they shall be as white as snow. Should it be added, None can sit down at the supper of the Lamb without a wedding-garment, and your righteousnesses, what are they before the pure law and piercing eye of God, but filthy rags? These I renounce, and seek to be found in Christ Jesus, who is the Lord my righteousness. It is written in the word that he is to judge the world at the last day, By his obedience shall many be made righteous.

So that Jesus, the dear and adorable Jesus, is all my trust. His merits are my staff, when I pass through the valley of the shadow of death. His merits are my anchor, when I launch into the boundless ocean of eternity. His merits are the only riches which my poor soul, when stript of its body, desires to carry into the invisible world. If the God of

glory pleases to take notice of any mean endeavours to honour his holy name, it will be infinite condescension and grace; but his Son, his righteous and suffering Son, is all my hope, and all my salvation. Dear sir, pray for me, that the weaker I grow in body, the stronger I may become in this precious faith. May the choicest blessings attend you and yours! A letter would revive yours, &c.

P. S.—Though the days are come upon me, in which I have reason to say of worldly things, I have no pleasure in them; yet I find a secret satisfaction in this consideration, that to you, my dear friend, and to others of my candid acquaintance, I may be permitted, even when dead, to speak in my little treatises. May they, when the author is gone hence, never to be seen in these regions below, O may they testify, with some small degree of efficacy, concerning Jesus, that Just One! may they fan the flame of love to his person, and strengthen the principle of faith in his merits! Once more, dear sir, adieu.

LETTER XLI.

Weston-Favell, Aug. 22. 1747.

Dear Sir,—Having read Dr Middleton's introductory discourse, I hardly know what to think of his bold assertion, That all the miracles supposed to be wrought after the apostolic age, are absurd and fictitious. I must suspend my opinion concerning this point, till I find it either confirmed by the silence, or confuted by the arguments of the advocates for ecclesiastical antiquity. In the main, I approve of his design, which is to settle the proofs of our holy religion on the basis of the inspired writings, and to deduce its doctrines from the same sacred source. The Scriptures, as our friend H—— beautifully expresses himself, are the armoury of God, from whence we may draw weapons of a divine temper, wherewith to engage all that oppose the truth, or hold the same in unrighteousness.

Does not this ingenious writer bear a little too hard upon the religious character and exemplary behaviour of the primitive fathers? I cannot but think they had, at least in this respect, a very evident superiority over most of their successors. How flowing, perspicuous, and elegant is the Doctor's style; and how stiff, obscure, and bombast, the language of the archdeacon! I dare say you could not forbear smiling at his—blazing out most fastidious hypercritics; reproaching, (not virulently, but) tartly; lashing, (not severely, but) superciliously; and penetrating the very vitals of the dead languages.

If your Matho is not lent out of town, I wish you would be so good as to send for it, and favour me with a sight of it by the bearer. The reason of my requesting this is, that Mr —— informs me by my brother, if he has not the last piece by the middle of next week, his press must stand still. And methinks I would gladly peruse Matho before I suffer my last essay to depart. When can you afford me your conversation for an hour or two, in order to examine Mr ——'s remarks, and bestow the finishing touches on the piece? Shall I wait upon you on Monday morning early? When this business is dispatched, your book, and my thanks, shall be returned together.—Yours, &c.

LETTER XLII.

Weston-Favell, Oct. 31. 1747.

DEAR SIR,—WITH thanks I return Colonel Gardiner's life. The worthy author has presented me with a copy, which I hope will serve to humble and animate me so long as I live.

Abernethy on the Divine Attributes, I will soon restore. In the mean time, shall I beg the favour of borrowing Pliny's Natural History?

You may remember who is to call upon you *(Deo volente)* on Monday morning. I must devote the

greatest part of this day to prepare my translatory quota of Dickson's *Thereapeutica Sacra*. The thoughts of our little society bring to my mind a pleasing circumstance, which I observed when we were at our last interview. My very valuable friend Dr S—— told a story, in which he had occasion to refer to some profane and execrable language. Instead of defiling his lips with a repetition of the hellish jargon, he was so truly discreet as only to mention it under the general title of horrid oaths. A delicacy this, which I thought highly becoming both the Christian and the gentleman. I have sometimes taken the freedom to observe, in the most respectful manner, upon some little inadvertencies in my worthy friend's conduct; but now it is with the highest pleasure that I congratulate him upon a most amiable piece of religious decorum introduced into his discourse.—I am, &c.

LETTER XLIII.

Weston-Favell, Dec. 2. 1747.

Dear Sir,—The surprise which your letter gives me is inexpressible, and the grief equal. I will hasten as soon as possible to my worthy and afflicted friend. O that I could bring with me some healing balm for his wounded heart! It would be no small alleviation of my own sorrows, if I might be instrumental to make his less. A long continued cold, and an unexpected journey, have unfitted me from following your prescriptions. I am obliged to your candour for ascribing my neglect to this cause, and not to any disregard of your advice; for I am persuaded,

> —— Si qua potuissent Pergama dextra
> Defendi, etiam hac defensa fuissent.

I will stay the messenger no longer; and I hope I shall not stay long before I set out myself. It is owing wholly to an accident that I do not accompany the bearer, with a view and a hope of administering some consolation to Dr S——. I am, &c.

LETTER XLIV.

Northampton, Dec. 5. 1747.

DEAR AND WORTHY SIR,—YOU will wonder to see a name which you have but lately known at the bottom of this paper. But how, how will you be surprised, how grieved, to read the occasion! It is so afflicting, almost so insupportable to our valuable friend, that he is unable to give you the narrative; therefore has committed the office (*triste ministerium!*) to my pen. And must I tell you? can you bear to hear it? Mrs S—— is dead; that amiable and excellent lady is dead. She was safely delivered of a daughter the very day on which Dr S—— wrote to you last; was as well as could be expected or wished on Sunday morning; and departed this life on Tuesday evening. On Sunday in the evening our common friend perceived her to be attended with some alarming, and, as he apprehended, fatal symptoms. Dr K—— was immediately sent for, who gave some encouragement. On Monday came Dr J—— through a very deep snow, and most terrible weather, but urged by friendship and compassion. The moment that sagacious practitioner beheld her, he confirmed Dr S——'s first sentiments, that the case was irrecoverable; and added, that the great change was at the very door, and would probably take place in twenty-four hours, which came to pass accordingly.

Your own tender and sensible heart will naturally conclude Dr S—— is so oppressed with sorrow, as not to be capable, at present, of answering his most valued correspondents:

Curæ leves loquuntur, ingentes stupent.

But he intends, when time has somewhat alleviated his grief, and religion has more reconciled him to the awful dispensation, to make a particular reply to the whole of your epistolary favour. You will, I do not question, recommend our distressed friend to the

Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort. May we all lay this awakening stroke of Providence to heart, and give all diligence to have our sins pardoned through redeeming blood, our souls renewed by sanctifying grace; that whether we live, we may live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we may die unto the Lord; so that living or dying we may be the Lord's.

The second edition of my Meditations, with the addition of another volume, is at last published. I have given directions to my bookseller to send you a copy; and beg of you to accept it as a small, but the most speaking and eloquent expression I am able to form, of that great, that growing esteem I have conceived for Dr Swan, ever since our first interview at Weston. Be pleased, dear sir, to read it with the utmost, or rather with your own candour; and sometimes dart up a short petition for the author, that, whatever is the fate of his book, himself may live over his writings, and be what he describes.—I am, &c.

LETTER XLV.

Weston-Favell, 1747.

Dear Sir,—Mr H—— delivered your message. Upon a repeated perusal of your Rules and Orders, I find nothing to add, nor any thing to alter. I think it is a finely calculated scheme, and seems very likely to be productive of considerable good.

When the disciples were together, after their Master's resurrection, they had the honour, the comfort, and advantage of his divine presence. And why may not we, when associated on such a plan, and conversing with such views, reasonably hope for the same blessing?

I shall return all your books by the first opportunity; only the first volume of the History of the Bible, I beg to keep a little longer. The Bible I intend, for the future, to make the principal object

of my study. That beautiful and important exhortation shall be my ruling directory, ὁ λογος του Χριστου ενοικειτω εν υμιν πλουσιως.

Perhaps Dr W——ll will be so obliging as to answer my letter. And if so, I think it will be proper to defer writing to Mr R——n, and sending the draught, till I hear the Doctor's sentiments. I beg of you to accept the cordial compliments, as you have always the best wishes, and frequently the earnest prayers of, dear sir, yours, &c.

LETTER XLVI.

Weston-Favell, Dec. 12. 1747.

DEAR SIR,—THIS, I hope, will find you perfectly recovered from your indisposition, and thoroughly reconciled to God's holy will. Afflictions, when sanctified, are real blessings: they work humility, and wean from the world; they teach us to pour out, not our words only, but our very souls, before God in prayer; and create an ardent desire after that inheritance in heaven, which is incorruptible and immortal; after those mansions of peace, where sorrow and sighing flee away. May this be the effect of that awful stroke which has made so deplorable a breach on my friend's domestic comfort!

Next week Abernethy will return to your study; and I only wish that he might bring with him a little more of the everlasting and glorious gospel. With my compliments to Mrs ——, I am, &c.

LETTER XLVII.

Weston, Dec. 1747.

DEAR SIR,—I TRULY commiserate your variegated calamity; and heartily wish I could suggest any thing which might be the means of administering some ease to your afflicted mind, and of assisting you to reap ample benefit from your distressed situation.

You well know that all afflictions, of what kind

soever, proceed from God: I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things, Isaiah xlv. 7. They spring not from the dust; are not the effects of a random chance, but the appointment of an all-wise, all-foreseeing God, who intends them all for the good of his creatures. This, I think, is the fundamental argument for resignation, and the grand source of comfort. This should be our first reflection, and our sovereign support. He that gave me my being, and gave his own Son for my redemption, he has assigned me this suffering. What he ordains, who is boundless love, must be good; what he ordains, who is unerring wisdom, must be proper.

This reconciled Eli to the severest doom that ever was denounced: It is the Lord! and though grievous to human nature, much more grievous to parental affection, yet it is unquestionably the best; therefore I humbly acquiesce, I kiss the awful decree, and say from my very soul, let him do what seemeth him good, 1 Sam. iii. 18.

This calmed the sorrows of Job under all his unparalleled distresses: The Lord gave me affluence and prosperity; the Lord has taken all away: rapacious hands and warring elements were only his instruments; therefore I submit, I adore, I bless his holy name.

This consolation fortified the man Christ Jesus at the approach of his inconceivably bitter agonies: The cup which, not my implacable enemies, but my Father, by their administration, has given me, shall I not drink it? It is your Father, dear sir, your heavenly Father, who loves you with an everlasting love, that has mingled some gall with your portion in life. Sensible of the beneficent hand from which the visitation comes, may you always bow your head in patient submission; and acknowledge, with the excellent but afflicted monarch Hezekiah, Good is the word of the Lord concerning me, 2 Kings xx. 19.

All afflictions are designed for blessings; to do us good at the latter end, however they may cross our desires, or disquiet our minds at present. Happy (says the Spirit of inspiration, and not wretched) is the man whom God correcteth, Job v. 17.; and for this reason, because his merciful chastenings, though not joyous, but grievous, yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby, Heb. xii. 11. God's ways are not as our ways. The children whom we love we are apt to treat with all the soft blandishments and fond caresses of profuse indulgence; and too, too often cocker them to their hurt, if not to their ruin. But the Father of spirits is wise in his love, and out of kindness severe. Therefore it is said, Whom he loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth, Heb. xii. 6. Would you not, dear sir, be a child of that everlasting Father, whose favour is better than life? Affliction is one sign of your adoption to this inestimable relation. Would you not be an "heir of the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away?" Affliction is your path to this blissful patrimony. Through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of heaven, Acts xiv. 22. Would you not be made like your ever-blessed and amiable Redeemer? He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and every disciple must expect to be as his master.

Perhaps you may think your affliction peculiarly calamitous; and that, if it had been of some other kind, you could more cheerfully submit, more easily bear it. But you are in the hands of an all-wise Physician, who joins to the bowels of infinite love the discernment of infinite wisdom. He cannot mistake your case. He sees into the remotest events; and, though he varies his remedies, always prescribes with the exactest propriety to every one's particular state. Assure yourself, therefore, the visitation which he appoints is the very properest recipe in the dispensatory of heaven. Any other would have been less

fit to convey saving health to your immortal part, and less subservient to your enjoyment of the temporal blessings which may, perhaps, be yet in store for you.

Should you inquire what benefits accrue from afflictions? Many and precious. They tend to wean us from the world. When our paths are strewed with roses, when nothing but music and odours float around, how apt are we to be enamoured with our present condition, and forget the crown of glory, forget Jesus and everlasting ages? But affliction, with a faithful though harsh voice, rouses us from the sweet delusion. Affliction warns our hearts to rise and depart from these inferior delights, because here is not our rest. True and lasting joys are not here to be found. The sweeping tempest, and the beating surge, teach the mariner to prize the haven, where undisturbed repose waits his arrival. In like manner, disappointments, vexations, anxieties, crosses, teach us to long for those happy mansions, where all tears will be wiped away from the eyes, Rev. xxi. 4.; all anguish banished from the mind; and nothing, nothing subsist, but the fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore.

Afflictions tend to bring us to Christ. Christ has unspeakable and everlasting blessings to bestow: such as the world can neither give nor take away; such as are sufficient to pour that oil of gladness into our souls, which will swim above the waves of any earthly tribulation. But are we not, dear sir, are we not most unhappily indolent and inattentive to these blessings, in the gay hours of an uninterrupted prosperity? It is very observable, that scarce any made application to our divine Redeemer, in the days of his abode with us, but the children of affliction. The same spirit of supineness still possesses mankind. We undervalue, we disregard the Lord Jesus, and the unspeakable privileges of his gospel, while all proceeds smoothly, and nothing occurs to discompose the tenor of our tranquillity. But when misfortunes

harass our circumstances, or sorrows oppress our minds; then we are willing, we are glad, we are earnest, to find rest in Christ.

In Christ Jesus there is pardon of sins. Sin is a burden, incomparably sorer than any other distress. Sin would sink us into the depths of eternal ruin, and transfix us with the agonies of endless despair. But Christ has, at the price of his very life, purchased pardon for all that fly to him. He has borne the guilt of their sins in his own body on the tree, 1 Pet. ii. 24. Have they deserved condemnation? He has sustained it in their stead. Are they obnoxious to the wrath of God? He has endured it as their substitute; he has made satisfaction, complete satisfaction for all their iniquities, Rom. iii. 25, 26. So that justice itself, the most rigorous justice, can demand no more. O that distresses may prompt us to prize this mercy! may incite us to desire ardently this blessedness! then it will be good for us to have been afflicted, Psalm cxix. 71.

Christ has obtained for us the gift of the Holy Spirit, (Gal. iii. 2.) to sanctify our hearts, and renew our natures. An unrenewed carnal mind, is ten thousand times more to be lamented, more to be dreaded, than any external calamities. And nothing can cure us of this most deadly disease but the sanctification of the Spirit. The divine Spirit alone is able to put the fear of God in our souls, and awaken the love of God in our hearts, Jer. xxxii. 40. His influences suggest such awful and amiable thoughts to our minds, as will be productive of these Christian graces. This sacred principle subdues our corruptions, and conforms us to our blessed Redeemer's image. How is this best gift of Heaven disesteemed by the darlings of the world, who have nothing to vex them? But how precious is it, how desirable, to the heirs of sorrow? They breathe after it, as the thirsty hart panteth for the water brooks. They cannot be satisfied without its enlightening, purifying, cheering communications. This is all their request, and all

their relief, "that the spirit of Christ may dwell in their hearts," Rom. viii. 9.; may enable them to possess their souls in patience, Luke xxi. 19. and derive never-ending good from momentary evils. Before I close these lines, permit me to recommend one expedient, which yet is not mine, but the advice of an inspired apostle, If any be afflicted, let him pray. Dear sir, fly to God in all your adversity, pour out your complaints before him in humble supplication, and shew him your trouble, Psalm cxlii. 2. When I am in heaviness, says a holy sufferer, I will think upon God, Psalm lxi. 2.—his omnipotent power, his unbounded goodness, whose ear is ever open to receive the cry of the afflicted. When the psalmist was distressed on every side, without were fightings, within were fears, the throne of grace was the place of his refuge; I give myself to prayer, Psalm cix. 3. was his declaration. This method, we read, Hannah took, and you cannot but remember the happy issue, 1 Sam. i. 10. Let me entreat you to imitate these excellent examples; frequently bend your knees, and more frequently lift up your heart, to the Father of mercies, and God of all consolation; not doubting, but that through the merits of his dear Son, through the intercession of your compassionate High-priest, he will hear your petitions, will comfort you under all your tribulations, and make them all work together for your infinite and eternal good.

In the mean time, I shall not cease to pray, that the God of all power and grace may vouchsafe to bless THESE CONSIDERATIONS, and render them as balm to your aching heart, and as food to the divine life in your mind. I am, dear sir, with much esteem, compassion, and respect, your very sincere well-wisher, &c.

LETTER XLVIII.

Weston-Favell, Dec. 5. 1747.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I ASSURE you I am extremely concerned for the death of your most excellent wife,

as indeed, indeed I think she has left few equals behind her: "Take her all in all, I shall never see her like again." * But, my dear friend, you must not give way to excessive sorrow. All proper allowances I tenderly do and ought to make, as such will be made both by God and man; but yet our sorrows must not be immoderate, or inconsistent with the will of God, and resignation to his providence. Give me leave to present you with, and recommend to you, on this melancholy occasion, a repeated perusal of Dr Grosvenor's Mourner, or the Afflicted Relieved. It is a most valuable gem; and as it is wrote in numbers like the Spectators, it will not weary your attention. I am sure you stand in need of the consolations and helps there suggested. I am never without some of these little books to give away to my acquaintance under affliction, especially for the loss of dear relations or valuable friends. I think it, for these purposes, one of the most judicious and universally useful books extant; and it well deserves to be translated into the language of every nation where Christianity is professed.

Do not you often recollect, in this season of distress, the discourse, the prayers, the amiable, the rejoicing, and the heavenly spirit of our dear friend, who was with us last month? Blessed be God for making him such a lovely example, and such a zealous promoter of pure and undefiled religion! Blessed be God for promising us the same Divine Spirit; and giving us the same glorious hopes, which have had such a quickening and ennobling influence on his heart! The rich goodness of the Lord exercised to others, should encourage our expectations, should strengthen our faith. Let it then, let it be so. Adieu, my dear friend! I will come to you again very soon. In the mean time, I shall not cease to pray for you; as I am, with great compassion and great esteem, most tenderly, most sincerely yours, &c.

* Shakspeare's Hamlet.

LETTER XLIX.

Weston-Favell, Jan. 12. 1748.

My dear Friend,—Loth to make your servant stay, and loth to trespass too much upon the patience of our family who wait for me, I write in the utmost hurry. After so great an opinion as that of the judicious Dr ——, I hardly dare venture to deliver my sentiments; yet I must confess myself strongly inclined to prefer your intended motto.

Is it a vulgarism? Rather the simplicity of the gospel; accommodated to the lowest capacity, suited to strike ordinary readers; who are the persons most likely to be impressed. Or, if it is a vulgarism, let this be for the illiterate, the poetry for the polite.

Is it Puritanical? Be not ashamed of the name. They (the Puritans) were the soundest preachers, and I believe the truest followers of Jesus Christ. If such an imputation is a bugbear, we shall not act like gallant soldiers of Christ. Is it not the most important truth in the whole book of God? the surest, easiest, most compendious means of overcoming the dread of death? If so, I need not make the conclusion.

Will censure ensue? Dear sir, dread it not. Be bold for once to despise ridicule; or rather, if it must needs fall upon you, to glory in this: *Dedecus haud indecorum.*

Pardon my freedom. Only just think on my reasons. Reject them, and welcome. I shall be glad to be overruled for the better.—Yours, &c.

LETTER L.

Weston-Favell, Feb. 4. 1748.

Dear Sir,—I sincerely thank you for taking the trouble of correcting my marks for Italics. I am glad you did not erase Mrs S——'s name. I assure

you, Doctor, I shall always esteem it a real honour to be reckoned in the number of your friends; and shall look upon it as one of the satisfactions accruing from my book, that it tells it in so pertinent a manner to the world; though, with regard to your truly amiable deceased lady, I fear it will be an instance of the arrogance of my heart, and a reproach upon the impotence of my pen, or else I would say,

—— Si quid mea scriptula possunt,
Nulla dies unquam memori illam eximet ævo.

Yours, &c.

LETTER LI.

Weston-Favell, March, 1748.

DEAR SIR,—I AM very much obliged for the present of your franks; they could never be more wanted, or more welcome. If you have not so much as you wish, to relieve the necessities of the poor, distribute from my stock. I am cloistered up in my chamber, and unacquainted with the distresses of my brethren. Lend me therefore your eye to discover proper objects, and your hand to deal about my little fund for charity. Do not forbid me to send a guinea, in my next, for this purpose; do not deny me the pleasure of becoming, through your means, an instrument of some little comfort to my afflicted fellow-creatures; and (what is a far more endearing consideration) to the friends, the brethren, the members of him who died for my sins. If you have any other friend, to whose taste it may be agreeable, and in whose hands useful, I will empower you to make the present. Herewith comes the Descant enlarged. I hope you will be able to read it, and not a little to improve it. Can you engage Dr —— to run it over? to grant *prostremum hoc munus?*

I must write it over again, so fear not to erase and blot. I have not seen where or how I can handsomely introduce that fine quotation from Mr Dyer's Ruins of Rome; but will still consider it, because you desire it.—I am, dear sir, yours, &c.

LETTER LII.

April, 1748.

Fy, fy upon you, dear Dr ——. I had been endeavouring all the day long to fix my admiration on that most exalted, that most amiable Being, who, though possessed of excellencies which the very angels contemplate with rapture and adoration, yet humbled himself to death, the death of the cross, for my friend and me; when your praises, kind indeed, but, alas! perniciously kind, fetched my thoughts from their proper element, and proper object, to grovel on a creature, and that the meanest of creatures—self. I could wish myself, on such occasions, like the deaf adder, which stoppeth her ears, and refuseth to hear the voice of the charmer, charm he never so sweetly. Praise is most enchanting music to the human ear; shall I rather say, most delicious poison to the human taste? From strangers, or complimentary correspondents, we must expect a touch upon this string, a sprinkling of this spice. But among friends, bosom friends, Christian friends, it must not be so. You and I, dear sir, will teach one another's hearts to rise in wonder, and glow with love, at the consideration of that ever-blessed sovereign, who is higher than the kings of the earth, higher than the potentates of heaven, and yet lay in darkness and the shadow of death, that he might make us the children of God, and exalt us to everlasting life. Pardon my excursions on this subject. A letter from my father is enough to cast contempt upon created things. It informs me that my poor sister is reduced very low; so low, that my father cannot hear her speak. He seems to look upon her life to be in very great danger. May the Father of compassions restore her health, that she may live to the honour of her dying Master, and be a comfort to her afflicted parents!—Glad I am that my dear friend can relish the writings of that shining and burning light Mr ——. Our disesteem of such

gospel doctrines as he teaches, generally arises from ignorance of ourselves. Therefore I heartily join with the Grecian sage, in saying *E cœlo descendit*. I am affectionately yours, &c.

LETTER LIII.

Weston-Favell, May 26. 1748.

DEAR SIR,—I HAVE given directions to my bookseller to present you with the new edition of my Meditations; which I desire you to accept, and to look upon as a small but unfeigned expression of my most affectionate esteem. The pleasure of your company I cannot expect often to enjoy; let me therefore, dear sir, by means of my little treatise, converse with you now and then, as it were by proxy, with a view of familiarizing to our minds those sublime subjects which will be the study and the delight of a glorious eternity.

Another set I have sent for Mr ——; which I beg of you to render acceptable, by presenting. That worthy minister stands entitled to my grateful acknowledgments for his judicious and excellent letter. His candid and weighty observations have induced me to alter the exceptionable passage in the book; and will, I hope, incite me to cultivate in my heart that amiable spirit of charity which hopeth all things.

What I accidentally hinted to Dr ——, who favoured me with a sight of Mrs ——'s letter, I never imagined would have been communicated to her, or any person living. Had I suspected any such consequence, I should certainly have withheld my pen, and concealed what I might happen to think; because I neither relish controversy, nor have strength of mind, or solidity of judgment, sufficient to conduct the procedure of an argument. All my aim, all my desire is, to quicken in my own heart the seeds of practical faith and vital holiness. If to this I might be enabled to cherish the same sacred principles in the hearts of some of my serious and humble

acquaintance, I should wish for no other fruits of my labours. However, as Mrs ——'s objections are advanced, and are now before me, it would be a failure of respect to her, and a desertion of my divine Master's honour, if I did not attempt, at least, to satisfy her scruples, and vindicate his conduct. I shall, therefore, with all freedom, but with sincere goodwill, transmit my sentiments on every article of her letter.

And first, with regard to the little assistance which I have contributed, and which Mrs —— thinks worthy of her acknowledgments, I beg of her to observe, that it is owing, wholly owing, to her adored Redeemer. To him, to him alone, she is obliged (if there be an obligation in the case) for this friendly donation. He has been pleased to command this instance of my gratitude, for his unspeakably tender mercies to my soul. He has been pleased to declare, that he will look upon such a piece of kindness as done to his own most blessed self. This makes me, this makes all believers, glad to embrace every such occasion of shewing our thankfulness to our infinitely condescending, gracious Lord. The action which Mrs ——'s grateful pen calls generous, does not arise, as she expresses it, from any innate nobleness of mind. I remember the time, when this heart was hard as the flint, and these hands tenacious even to avarice. But it is Jesus, the quickening Spirit, and the lover of souls, who has made your friend to differ from his natural self. If the flinty bowels are melted into compassion, they are melted by a believing consideration of his most precious blood. If the avaricious hands are opened, and made ready to distribute, willing to communicate, they are made so by the free grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore not unto me, not unto me, but unto the great and good Redeemer, are all the returns of gratitude due.

"It is utterly inconsistent," says Mrs ——, "with my way of thinking, that the Son of God should be present at a wedding at all." But why should it

be thought utterly, why in any degree, inconsistent with his dignity or wisdom, to be present at the solemnization of an ordinance which he himself instituted; instituted in the state of innocency itself; instituted, for promoting the happiness of our nature, and for perpetuating, with regularity and purity, its very existence? If our Lord opened his commission, and shewed his divine credentials at a bridal festivity, it was, in my humble opinion, with a very peculiar propriety: Because it was a significant intimation of the benign and amiable genius of his religion, that he came, not in the austere and recluse spirit of the Baptist; came not to forbid, but to sanctify, the lawful and truly valuable comforts of our present being. If Mrs —— pleases to consult the office of matrimony, as it is celebrated by our church, she will find a substantial reason assigned for our Saviour's gracing this solemnity with his presence, and working his first miracle on this occasion. And the more attentively she reads the Scriptures, she will find, in various places, how the Son of God delights to honour this sacred institution: since he calls himself the bridegroom of true believers; and declares that he will betrothe them to himself in righteousness: since he shadows forth their spiritual union with his blessed self, by that most endearing, most indissoluble of ties, the nuptial; and figures out the satisfaction resulting from his gospel, and even the sublime enjoyments of his heavenly kingdom, by a marriage feast. When these things are taken into consideration, I hope it will appear that our holy Redeemer acted entirely in character, and conformably to the whole tenor of his revelation, by ennobling, by blessing the matrimonial festival with his presence.

But "such a sort of feast is in general a scene of revelling." It is, I must acknowledge, too frequently so in our nation, and in our age. But was it also a scene of revelling, offensive to modesty, or contrary to sobriety, in early times and among the Jewish people? There seems to be a hint in this very

narrative, that they were particularly careful to prevent all manner of indecency, or dissolute indulgence. For this reason, they appointed a governor of the feast; a principal part of whose office was to see that no irregularities were committed, but that all was conducted with decorum as well as economy. Besides, if some of those festivities are perverted, will it follow that all are abused? Might not there be some serious set of neighbours who knew how to be merry after a godly sort, and fulfil the old Mosaical rule of rejoicing before the Lord their God? I myself have been present at the celebration of a wedding between Christian parties, and among Christian friends, where heavenly conversation, and joyful thanksgiving to the adorable Author of all our comforts, made the chief and the choicest part of our entertainment. And is there not very evident cause to suppose, that the nuptials in question were consummated between persons of such a character? The holy Jesus, his devout mother, and serious disciples, would scarcely have been invited, or would hardly have accepted the invitation, if it was an irreligious couple, or a wanton assembly of guests.

But "in such a mixed multitude, it is hardly supposable that all should be serious in their dispositions, or innocent in their conversation." Would not then the presence of so venerable and divine a Person, strike an awe upon the most loose inclination? Could not his eternal power and Godhead control the most abandoned temper and ungovernable tongue? He that intimidated the sacrilegious rabble, when they profaned the temple, and drove them before his single scourge; he that struck prostrate to the ground a whole band of armed men, only with his word; he who had all hearts in his hand, and could turn them whithersoever he pleased; he would doubtless prohibit, at this juncture, whatever might carry the appearance of an immodest or intemperate freedom. So that Mrs —— need not question but that, if any of the company was dissolutely dis-

posed, the authority of our Lord's character, and much more the agency of his Spirit on their minds, did most effectually restrain all licentiousness.

"One would think," it is farther observed, "he might have improved some occurrence or other to their information and advantage." That this was not done is taken for granted; I suppose because the evangelist does not expressly record it. But is this a fair deduction, or a satisfactory reason? Are there not many mighty works which Jesus performed, many edifying conferences which Jesus held, professedly omitted by the inspired penman? Was not our Lord's tongue a fountain of wisdom ever flowing, and a well of life never exhausted? When did that good Shepherd let slip an opportunity of feeding the flock? He went to feasts, in the same spirit, and for the same purpose, as he came into the world, to turn poor mankind from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. The sun might as well forbear shining, as the Sun of righteousness neglect to diffuse healing rays and heavenly knowledge all around. God's great design in sending his Son into the world was, that ignorant and sinful men might be reclaimed from the error of their ways, and be made wise unto salvation. And our Saviour solemnly declares, that he always did the will of him that sent him. If therefore this declaration be true, and if our Lord's conduct was uniform, we cannot but conclude that at Cana, as well as throughout all Galilee, his mouth was exercised in wisdom, and his tongue talked of judgment: that the words which dropped from his gracious, his instructive lips, were much sweeter than the richest dainties which the table yielded; much more reviving than even that generous wine, produced by a miracle, which his divine power on this distinguished occasion wrought. This reminds me of another objection, couched in the following words:—

"It is harder yet to reconcile his behaviour when there. To increase the wine when the guests had

well drunk, could tend to no other end than to promote and encourage intemperance." Perhaps Mrs —— does not sufficiently attend to the narration of the evangelist. I do not find it asserted, that these guests had well drunk. The expression is used, but applied to other persons, and the custom usual at other ceremonies of this nature. I once was acquainted with a worthy gentleman, who frequently invited to his table the young persons of his neighbourhood; and would take a pleasure in cultivating, by his discourse, the principles of sobriety, industry, and piety in their minds. Now, in case he had said, after supper was removed, "I know very well, my honest neighbours, it is customary with some persons of fortune to please and to pride themselves in making their visitants drunk. They push the glass briskly round, and press one bumper upon another, till they send their guest staggering to bed." But now would any one infer, from such a remark on the practice of others, that this was also the practice at my friend's house? To form any conclusion injurious to the sobriety of those guests, seems to be much the same illogical and unreasonable arguing. But, supposing the expression applied to the guests then present, what is its signification? The original word sometimes signifies no more than to drink with so moderate an indulgence, as innocently to exhilarate the spirits. It is used concerning Joseph's brethren, when they were treated in his palace, and had portions sent from his table, Gen. xliii. 34. Now, can any one, who is at all acquainted with the character of that exemplary patriarch, imagine that he would permit his brethren, in his own presence, to transgress the rules of temperance? Much less can any one, who really believes in Jesus, and seriously considers the design of his coming into the world, allow himself to suspect, that he would furnish fresh wine for those who (in the obnoxious sense of the word) had well drunk already. Could he, who is our sanctification, the Lord our purifier, administer to our inordinate gratifications?

"Yes," says Mrs ——, "because this increase of the wine could tend to no other end than to promote and encourage intemperance." Mrs —— possibly forgets, that the Jewish festivals were prolonged for several days; that a fresh succession of guests might be expected; that very probably a much greater resort of company than was provided for might be occasioned by our Lord's illustrious presence; that the miraculous supply might be intended for their accommodation; or, that it might not be all spent on that occasion, but reserved for the future accommodation of the married couple.* We read, John xxi. that the disciples took, at one cast, a vast multitude of great fishes. But did they eat them all immediately? Then they would have been gluttons indeed. They used for themselves what was necessary to satisfy their hunger, and sold the remainder to procure a livelihood. And why should we not conclude, that the bridegroom also, after a cheerful, but temperate refreshment of his visitants, preserved the remainder of that fine wine for future exigencies? This I take to be the case; and that our divine Master, by this means, rewarded him for his hospitality to himself and his followers; at the same time giving a most conspicuous proof, that, as he and his disciples were henceforth to have neither storehouse nor barn, but to subsist on the charity of others, none should be losers by entertaining him and his friends; that every such kindness should meet with a full recompense of reward.

"I must not omit the rough answer which he makes to his mother upon this occasion; which, I think, stands in need of an excuse, though we find none in the evangelist for it." I do not wonder that Mrs —— is somewhat offended at this expression.

* Many commentators are of opinion, that the water was not turned into wine in the water-pots, but as it ran into the cup, and the liquor in the water-pots remained water still. If so, which interpretation, without the least force, the text will very well bear, the lady's objection will appear to have less strength yet.

She is a lady of refined taste, and delicate address; and as she is not acquainted with the original language, nor aware how the phrase sounded in oriental ears, her remark is not to be looked upon as a censorious reflection, but as a proof of the politeness of her own sentiments. However, when she has an opportunity of consulting the ancient writers, she will find that their language had less of compliment, and more of sincerity than ours. It was so plain and artless, that persons of the best breeding have addressed ladies of the highest quality by this very name; and without intending any slight, or giving the least affront. She may remember, that the eleven brethren, when pleading before the governor of Egypt, pleading for their liberties, or even their very lives; when, if ever, their expressions would be most carefully guarded, and full of the utmost reverence, yet use this (to modern ears) uncourtly style—the man; meaning the viceroy himself, Gen. xliv. 26. Surely Mrs —— cannot forget, that our Lord, in his last moments, calls his mother by the very same appellation. Much less can she suspect, that he could be wanting in respect and tenderness, when his concern for the parent of his flesh triumphed over the agonies of the cross.

Perhaps the substance of the reply may be thought somewhat unkind. I believe it should be translated, Woman, what hast thou to do with me? *i. e.* in such instances as this, wherein my Deity is concerned, and an interposition of my omnipotence is requisite. I would have thee to know, once for all, that in affairs of this nature thou hast no authority over me; neither does it become thee to direct me. She was over-forward; she took too much upon her; and the answer was intended for a plain and serious rebuke. Accordingly, the humble mother, like one sensible of her misconduct, acquiesces with silent submission, and never offers (throughout the whole course of the history) to interfere in such a manner any more, but leaves it to his wisdom to determine,

both when his divine power should be exerted, and what it should effect.

"I do not know how it happens," says Mrs ——, "but the more nearly I examine matters of faith, the further I am from assenting to them." Will it be acceptable to my dear friend ——, or will it be disgustful, if I attempt to tell her how this in general happens? She seems to be possessed of great ingenuity of temper, and equal penetration of mind; therefore I cannot think she will take amiss, what I only offer to her impartial consideration, without any application to herself. It happens, because people are unrenewed by the sanctifying influences of divine grace. This is not my precarious conjecture, but the infallible declaration of the great Searcher of hearts. The carnal man, says the Wisdom of heaven, receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. This was the case with Nicodemus. Our Lord's discourse was a riddle, was quite unintelligible to him, because he was not born of the Spirit, had not experienced that sacred change on his heart. Sometimes it happens, because persons are wise in their own eyes; depending more upon the sagacity of their own judgment than upon the enlightening grace of God. I thank thee, O Father, says our blessed Redeemer, that whereas thou hast hid these things from (suffered them to lie hid, to escape the discernment of) the wise and prudent, thou hast revealed them unto babes. But who are they that are wise in their own conceits? I answer, they who study much, but pray little; who are often at their desk, but seldom on their knees; often exercise their minds in contemplations, but seldom lift up their hearts in earnest supplications to the Father of lights. But I must not enlarge. I shall be unsufferably tedious. I most cordially commiserate Mrs ——'s afflicted condition. I beg of her to be more frequent, more importunate, in her devout addresses to the gracious God. This

is proper, peculiarly proper for her distressed circumstances. If any be afflicted, let him pray—is a recipe prescribed from heaven; but more especially needful for the unsettled state of her mind. For let me say, and let it not be looked upon as an unfriendly saying, I cannot but fear that soul is sadly unsettled, far from being fixed on that Rock of ages, that only Foundation, Jesus Christ, who can suppose the blessed Redeemer chargeable with such great indecencies of speech, and still grosser improprieties of conduct. Can a mind, which admits such unworthy apprehensions of the great Immanuel, rely on him as its all-satisfying atonement, its complete righteousness, as the only anchor of its final, eternal hopes? May the God of all goodness reveal his dear Son in her heart, and in mine; that to us it may be given to know the mystery of his gospel; that we may see it to be the wisdom of God, and feel it to be the power of God to our salvation! You will, I dare say, heartily join your Amen to this important request. If any fresh difficulties are started, I beg leave to decline the province of attempting their solution; and would remit all future inquiries to the much clearer judgment, and abler pen, of our valuable friend Mr ——. Dear sir, pardon my prolixity; pray for my little piece and its author; and assure yourself of a willing and hearty return of this kindness, from your truly, &c.

LETTER LIV.

Weston-Favell, May 1748.

I SEND my dear friend the letter, which by his instigation I write. I send it this night, that if he discerns any thing in it very improper, it may be returned by the bearer, and the needful alterations made. Methinks it gives a person a tasteful satisfaction to find favour with judicious and excellent men. What a transport of delight must it create, to meet with the acceptance of the great Judge, the

eternal King, the Fountain of all perfection! To be admitted into his immediate presence; to be favoured with the brightest manifestations of his divine attributes; to love him with all our souls, and to be infinitely more beloved by him; to be conformed to his glorious, his most amiable image, and so much the more as ages in an endless succession roll on ages—this is life, this is blessedness, this is heaven! And this life is in his Son; this blessedness is purchased for us sinners by the obedience of Christ; to this heaven Christ is the way, the door, the passport. O let us not doubt but he will make us meet, by his Spirit, for the inheritance which he has obtained by his blood. Ever yours, &c.

LETTER LV.

Weston-Favell, Aug. 18. 1748.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—I RECEIVED your letter, full of tenderness and full of piety, last night. The very first thing I apply myself to this morning, is to acknowledge your favour, and confess my own negligence. But your affectionate heart will pity rather than blame me, when I inform you, that a relapse into the disorder of which I was never thoroughly cured, has brought me very low; insomuch that I am unable, either to discharge the duties of life, or to answer the demands of friendship. I have not been capable of preaching for several Sundays. Pyrmont water, ass's milk, and such kind of restoratives, I try, but try in vain. A great while ago I had begun a very long letter to my ever-esteemed Mr ——. In this I proposed candidly to represent the reasons of my belief, with regard to the final perseverance of the true believer. But weakness of spirits, and its never-failing concomitant, imbecility of thought, obliged me to desist. In the new edition of my Meditations, a note is added on this subject, declaring, That I am far from maintaining it as essential to Christianity, or necessary to salvation, &c. Where I say, What infidels are

we in fact? my meaning is, that we are all in some measure chargeable with practical infidelity; as we are all in some degree carnal, in some degree sinful, while we continue in this mortal body. Considering the infinite veracity, and unchangeable faithfulness of the blessed God, the most exalted saints have too much cause to lament their deficiency in point of faith, and evermore to cry out, Lord, help our unbelief!

An humble, well-grounded assurance of our reconciliation to God, is an unspeakably precious blessing. It is what all should seek, and many have attained. A gentleman told me a few days ago, That though he was often solicited to sin, often defiled with corruption, yet he had no manner of doubt concerning his everlasting salvation for these twenty years. On trying occasions, that seemed to endanger his final happiness, he fled, I presume, to the Fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. He viewed, by faith, the infinite, (O transporting truth!) the infinite satisfaction made by the bleeding Immanuel; and could not but confide, that a divine expiation was more powerful to save, than all past sins or present infirmities to destroy. This is the white stone of which Job was happily possessed—I know that my Redeemer liveth; and this sweet confidence supported him under all his tribulations. This is that earnest of the Spirit in our hearts, of which St Paul makes mention, and with which he was endued: We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. And, in the full assurance of this blessed hope, may you, my dear friend, be every day more and more established, strengthened, settled!

If at any time I am favoured with this heavenly gift, it is derived from such comfortable Scriptures: The Son of the Most High came into the world to save sinners: He died, the just for the unjust: He poured out his soul for transgressors. And since you and I know ourselves to be sinners, unjust, transgres-

sors, why should we not take to ourselves the comfort here offered for our acceptance? Why should we not make use of the privilege here consigned over to our enjoyment, and claim the legacy, in these clauses of our dying Master's testament, most evidently bequeathed to our souls? To found our expectations on this bottom, will be a means both of humbling and exalting us; of filling us with shame, and filling us with hope; that we may abhor ourselves, and yet rejoice in God our Saviour. Many build their hopes upon their religious duties and righteous deeds: such a building must unavoidably be shaken by every temptation, and sapped by every working of corruption. These are in no wise the foundation, but evidences rather that we are fixed on it. For my part, when I can exercise a grace, or perform a duty, that is debased by no imperfection, mingled with no corruption, then I will trust on self-righteousness. But till then, I must be very unreasonable if I do not rely on my illustrious Surety; fly to the ark of his wounds, and make mention of his righteousness only. This is all-sufficient; and never, never faileth those that trust in it.

You are not ignorant of my sentiments with regard to our dissenting brethren. Are we not all devoted to the same supreme Lord? Do we not all rely on the merits of the same glorious Redeemer? By professing the same faith, the same doctrine which is according to godliness, we are incorporated into the same mystical body. And how strange, how unnatural would it be, if the head should be averse to the breast, or the hands inveterately prejudiced against the feet, only because the one is habited somewhat differently from the other? Though I am steady in my attachment to the established church, I would have a right hand of fellowship, and a heart of love, ever ready, ever open, for all the upright evangelical dissenters. I thank you for the news you sent; it is impossible for me to pay in kind. Make my most respectful compliments ac-

ceptable to worthy Mr ——. I had agreed to wait upon him when I was in town; but my brother's illness growing worse, and soon proving fatal, deprived me of this pleasure, and sent me home to attend his corpse with sorrow to the grave. I hope you will be pleased with Archbishop Leighton's works; and I heartily pray, that they may be abundantly blessed to both our souls. I sincerely commiserate poor Miss D——'s case. Despair is indeed a fiery dart of the devil; but, blessed be Sovereign Goodness, there is a remedy against this malady. The Israelites, though wounded by the deadly serpents, looked to the brazen type hung upon the pole, and found a certain cure. And though we are stung by a sense of guilt, and almost perishing in extreme despondency, yet let us turn our eye to him who was lifted up on the cross, and we shall be whole. He who was gashed with wounds, and covered with blood, who was pierced with irons, and stabbed to the heart; he is our medicine, our recovery, our life. By his stripes we are healed. Oh! let us look unto him from the depths of distress, as well as from the ends of the earth, look unto him and be saved. My paper admonishes me to have done; but I cannot conclude without assuring you, that I love you most affectionately; so long as life and understanding last, shall pray for you among my choicest friends; and hope, when this transitory scene of things is at an end, to be, in bonds of nobler friendship and tenderer endearment, ever, ever yours, &c.

LETTER LVI.

Weston-Favell, June 9. 1749.

So, my dear Sir, the physicians upon the whole have given your friend no great hopes of a cure. The apothecary's shop, the ass's dugs, and the mineral waters may, they apprehend, palliate the disorder; but that even a palliation, it seems, is not to be expected, without keeping the mind quiet and cheerful:

and that this important end may most effectually be answered, the doctors have recommended diversions, travelling, and company; giving a caution, at the same time, I am told, against retirement, so much praying, and poring over religious books.

Now, if cheerfulness be the grand, the fundamental, the only recipe adequate even to the mitigation of this disease, I may venture to assert, that such recipe is to be found (possibly what I declare may be wondered at, but I aver it is to be found) in the Bible. It may be seen wrote at length, and it well deserves consideration, in Prov. xvii. 22. "A merry heart doth good like a medicine, but a broken spirit drieth the bones."

That a satisfied, a serene, and cheerful state of mind, will in this case be more beneficial than all manner of restoratives for decayed nature, or cordials for the sinking spirits, I can easily believe; nay, I am farther convinced, that whatever can be contrived by the most solicitous care of the physicians, will probably be rendered ineffectual, without this prime preparative, this most sovereign prescript. It is indispensably necessary, that all possible endeavours should be exerted to have the thoughts calm, placid, and easy. Every thing must be sacrificed to this most desirable end. Nothing can be more pernicious, in such circumstances, than the contrary situation of mind. But here will arise a question, How this inward tranquillity may most easily be attained, and most surely established? By company, by travelling, by diversions, the doctors and some others will reply. —I am far, very far from being an enemy to diversions, when properly chosen, and used with moderation. Travelling may beguile the sense of woe, and palliate for a while the malady. Company, when cheerful and improving, is an excellent source of comfort; when innocent only and entertaining, is of some present service, and ought to be allowed (at intervals) admittance. But these will no more reach the case now under consideration, are no more able

to create a settled tranquillity in the breast, than the gentle motions of a fan are sufficient to impel a wind-bound fleet. If they engross our time, and leave no leisure for nobler methods of consolation, they will certainly prove like heavy lowering clouds, and, instead of diffusing, will intercept the rays of heart-felt satisfaction. But what, may it be asked, would I substitute instead of these expedients? I would beg leave (unpolite as it may seem, and in a manner exploded) to recommend prayer to God, and the daily reading of the Scriptures. If kind and friendly conversation be judged proper, why should prayer be disapproved? Prayer is an humble, but delightful intercourse, with the best, the greatest, the everlasting Friend. And has any earthly friend exercised more loving-kindness? is any earthly friend more able to administer relief, than the blessed God? If there be such friends, let them be our whole dependance, and let omnipotent Goodness be secluded from any regard.

God has so loved us, that he gave his own Son, dearer to himself than angels, and all worlds, to die for our salvation. Rather than we should perish for ever, he sent his infinitely glorious Son to take upon him our nature, and suffer the unknown agonies of crucifixion. To shew his readiness to succour us in any distress, he styles himself the Father of mercies, and God (not of some, but) of all comfort, 2 Cor. i. 3. And where is the person from whom we may more reasonably expect to receive tender and compassionate succours, than from this all-gracious God? Is he not as powerful as he is gracious? What Job said of his companions, is in a degree true of every human aid,—Impotent and miserable comforters are ye all. But the God of heaven is able to give songs in the night of distress; to make the bones that sorrow and anguish have broken, to rejoice. If he speak peace, who shall cause disquietude, or what shall destroy our tranquillity? Indeed, if we apply for comfort to any thing lower than heaven, or by

any such means as exclude frequent prayer, we neglect the fountain of living waters, and hew to ourselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. The Scriptures (and believe me, as I speak from daily experience) are a treasury of comfort. One who had drank deep of the cup of sorrow declares, that they rejoice the heart; and that for his own part, if his delight had not been in the divine law, he should have perished in his trouble; (see Bible, Psal. cxix. 92.) These things, says the favourite disciple, write we unto you (not barely that you may have joy, but) that your joy may be full, John xv. 11. And St Paul adds, that whatever things are written by the Spirit of inspiration, are written for our benefit; that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope, Rom. xv. 4.; that blessed hope of eternal life, which is an anchor to the soul in all the storms of adversity; which is the oil of gladness, swimming above all the waves of affliction. By having recourse to diversions and amusements, in preference to the strong consolations suggested in the Bible, we act as injudiciously, we shall be deceived as certainly, as if, amidst the sultry heats of summer, we should seek cooling refreshment from a painted tree, and shun the embowering shady covert of a real grove.

If we are afflicted, the Scriptures acquaint us, that our afflictions are the chastisements of a Father, not the scourges of an enemy. They give us assurance, that the all-disposing Providence will not suffer us to be afflicted above what we are able to bear; (see 1 Cor. x. 13.); that they shall turn to our good, and bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness; that they are light, are only for a moment, and yet shall work out for us a weight, an eternal weight of glory. Can all the volumes of heathen morality suggest, or all the recreations of the world afford, such rational and solid consolation? Without these consolations, afflictions will be like a latent sore, smarting and rankling in the heart; will produce discon-

tent with our condition, and repining at Providence; a melancholy temper, and a fretful carriage. Trifling company, and worldly pleasures, will serve only to aggravate the misery, and make us inwardly mourn, that while others are in the elevations of mirth, we are pressed with a weight of calamity; whereas, by means of those sovereign consolations, afflictions may be improved to the health of the mind, and become a most salutary expedient for furthering our spiritual happiness.

Can any thing be more, or equally comfortable, than the privileges recorded in that charter of our salvation, the Scriptures? There we are told, that as many as truly believe in Jesus Christ, are children of the Almighty; that the Lord who commandeth the waters, the glorious God who maketh the thunder, the everlasting King who ruleth all things in heaven and earth, is their Father; he pities them as a father pities his own children, Psalm ciii. 13.; and that a mother may sooner forget her sucking child, than he can remit his tender care for their present welfare and endless felicity, Isaiah xlix. 15. That because we are sinners, Christ Jesus, with infinitely more than parental tenderness, bore our sins, and expiated all our guilt, in his own bleeding body upon the tree, 1 Peter ii. 24. Because we frequently offend, and always fail, our merciful High-priest ever liveth to make intercession for us, and to plead his divine merits in our behalf, Heb. vii. 25. Because we have many corruptions within, and are assaulted by various temptations without, we have a promise of the blessed Spirit to subdue our corruptions, Gal. iii. 14.; Ezek. xxxvi. 27. and renew us after the image of him who created us, Col. iii. 10. Because we are liable to manifold misfortunes, and visited with a variety of sorrows, the same Holy Spirit is promised, under the amiable character of a Comforter, John xv. 7.; Luke xi. 13. Because all flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof (the youth, the beauty, the wealth, all mortal accom-

plishments, and every worldly enjoyment) is withering, and transient as the flower of the field, (Isa. xl. 6.) the Scriptures direct our view, and consign over to our faith a most incomparable reversionary inheritance; an inheritance reserved in heaven for us, which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, 1 Pet. i. 4.

Are these things, I would ask the physicians, likely to deject the mind, or oppress it with heaviness? Need their patients fear an aggravation of distresses from the offer, from the enjoyment of such blessings? Much more reasonably might the bleeding wound fly from the lenient hand, dread the healing balm, and court its cure from the viper's envenomed tooth. Have these truths a tendency to engender gloomy apprehensions, as the medical gentlemen are too apt to imagine, or do these increase the load which galls the afflicted mind? Rather, what heart (that attends to, and believes such glad tidings) can forbear even leaping for joy? These are calculated to put off our sackcloth, and gird us with gladness, are enough to turn the groans of grief into the songs of gratitude.

Cheered by these reviving considerations, supported by this blessed hope, the ancient Christians were more than conquerors over all their calamities; they even gloried in tribulations, because these were the appointed way to the kingdom of heaven, Acts xiv. 22. They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that they had, in the world above, a better and more enduring substance, Heb. x. 34. They perceived with complacency the decay of their earthly tabernacle; because there remained for them, after their dissolution, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, 2 Cor. v. 1. Perhaps we may not arrive at such heights of heroic and triumphant exultation; but surely we should try those remedies, which in their case were so surprisingly and happily successful.

Upon the whole, a peaceful composure of mind,

and calm resignation to the all-wise will of God; a holy joy in the merits of our ever-blessed Redeemer, and a well-grounded hope of unutterable and immortal bliss in a better world; these, these are more absolutely needful for a case like this, and will do more towards relief, than all the drugs that nature produces. And very sure I am, that these noble anodynes are dispensed no where but in the Scriptures; are to be procured no otherwise than by prayer. Other methods may stupify for a moment, but will not remove the pain, much less introduce permanent ease.

I speak not this from mere speculation, or conjectural probability. I have myself experienced the efficacy of the preceding expedients for these desirable purposes. Having been a sort of veteran in affliction, I have been under a necessity of applying these consolations; and have the utmost reason to bear witness, that there are none like them. The Scriptures are the treasury of joy and peace, and the truly religious are generally the most uniformly cheerful.

If you apprehend what I have here advanced on the means of obtaining true cheerfulness and solid peace of mind, may be in any measure instrumental to the comfort of your friend, you would do well perhaps to communicate it, as I presume you are not ashamed of appearing in the recommendation of the Bible. The physicians would probably sneer at such sort of advice, but the arguments will not be the less valid on that account; and if their patient be seriously disposed, such sneers would have little or no effect.

Do you recollect Dr Young's lines * in the Eighth Night?

> ———Wouldst thou not laugh,
> This counsel strange should I presume to give—
> Retire, and read thy Bible, to be gay;
> There truths abound of sovereign aid to peace.

* See Letter CLX. in this volume.

But these, thou think'st, are gloomy paths to joy:
False joys indeed are born from want of thought;
True joy from thought's full bent and energy:
And this demands a mind in equal poise,
Remote from gloomy grief and glaring joy.
Much joy not only speaks small happiness;
But happiness that shortly must expire.
Can joy, unbottom'd in reflection, stand?
Can such a joy meet accidents unshock'd?
Or talk with threatening death, and not turn pale?

Though my letter is much longer than I at first intended, and stands in need of an apology for its prolixity, I cannot conclude without giving you a fresh assurance, that amongst the great number of those who esteem and respect you, there is not one of them who more sincerely regards you than, good sir, your most obedient, and very humble servant.

LETTER LVII.

Weston-Favell, July 23. 1749.

DEAR SIR,—THE favour you have done me, in presenting me with Mr Moses Brown's works, was far from my expectation. Please to accept my best thanks for the gift, which, I dare say, will in the perusal prove perfectly agreeable, and not a little useful.

I hope the divine Providence will give his Sunday Thoughts an extensive spread, and make them an instrument of diffusing the savour of true religion. Seldom, if ever, have I seen a treatise that presents the reader with so full, yet concise a view; so agreeable, yet so striking a picture of true Christianity, in its most important articles, and most distinguishing peculiarities. Though I am utterly unacquainted with the author, I assure myself he is no novice in the sacred school, and has more than a speculative knowledge of the gospel; every page discovers traces of an excellent heart, that has itself experienced what the muse sings. I am, &c.

LETTER LVIII.

Weston-Favell, July 29. 1749.

THANKS to my dear friend for his welcome letter. It imparted joy to my heart; and having communicated pleasure to our family, is gone (part of it, I mean) to make glad your children and your friends at Northampton. I must confess, I never was so much disheartened at your disorder as many others were, even though the physicians themselves had given you over; and though I have been often accosted by some of your cordial well-wishers with such saddening addresses, "I am sorry, sir, to hear that Dr S—— is gone to Bristol, without any likelihood of returning alive." I really believe that God has some signal work for you to do. He that has snatched the brand from the fire, and made it a polished shaft in his quiver, will not, I persuade myself, so soon cast it away, or break it to pieces. I have a strong presage, that almighty Goodness will continue you as an instrument to glorify his Son Jesus Christ, and to turn many to righteousness, years and years after I am gone hence, and seen no more. And I bless, together with you, his holy name, for confirming so far my apprehensions, as to begin the work of your recovery from so deplorable an illness. May he do in this case as he will in the more important affair of our eternal salvation, thoroughly accomplish what he has graciously begun!

Your family is in prosperity; your olive plants thrive, and are glossy with health. I asked Sally, Where her papa was, and how he did? and her pretty little lips lisped, Very bad, and gone to Bristol. Think, my friend, when you remember those sweet and engaging children, think on that delightful promise in Scripture, Can a mother forget her sucking child? yea, she may forget, yet will not I forget thee, Isa. xlix. 15.

From my heart I pity your sufferings; but if I

pity your distress, with what infinitely more tender compassion are you regarded by your heavenly Father? by him who said in the multitude of his mercies, "My Son shall bleed, that you may be healed: My only Son shall die, that you may live for evermore." May this blood, thus shed for you, preserve your body and soul to everlasting life! I hope you will be enabled to cast your burden upon the Lord, and resign yourself wholly to his wise disposal; and, doubtless, you will experience to your comfort, that he has the bowels of a Father to commiserate, and the arm of Omnipotence to succour.

A passage in the epistle to the Colossians, which I read this very day, (viz. chap. i. ver. 11.) is extremely pertinent to your case, and what I shall frequently pray may be fulfilled to your great consolation,—That you may be strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering, with joyfulness. If you should live to give me an hour's conversation, this verse, and the preceding, would furnish us with a most pleasing and improving subject of discourse. The conciseness, the propriety, the energy of the inspired supplications, is admirable. But I must waive such remarks, lest I send you a preachment instead of an epistle.

I heard you condemned the other day, in a large company, and indeed treated with a malignant severity, about an affair in which, to my certain knowledge, you had acted with great generosity. I explained, to the confusion of the relater, all those circumstances which he had so grossly misrepresented; and then I quoted the remark of Mr Richardson, in his Clarissa, viz. "That difficult situations (like yours) make seeming occasions of censure unavoidable; and that where the reputation of another (especially of a man of character) is concerned, we should never be in haste to censure, or to judge peremptorily on first surmises." *Audi alteram partem*, is always my rule. It is our duty to use circumspection;

and to be upon our guard to cut off occasion from those who seek occasion to misrepresent and injure us: after this precaution, we should not be too solicitous about the clamours of the malevolent and the unthinking. May the God of wisdom give us that prudence, which is profitable to direct! And then

Conscia mens recti famæ mendacia ridet.

This was the Heathens' cure for the wounds of defamation; this their armour against those keenest of arrows, bitter words. But see in this, as well as in every other instance, the noble superiority of the Christian scheme! Being defamed, we bless, says the apostle. Pray for them that despitefully use you, says his divine Master. This not only baffles, but more than triumphs over the efforts of malice; and brings an increase of virtue, consequently of happiness, even from the poison of malignity, and the gall of misery.

The bishop has been at Northampton, and his charge turned upon the study of the Scriptures; which he affectionately recommended, and forcibly urged. There was something omitted, which I could not but wish had been represented and enforced; however, in the main it was excellent, and what I should rejoice to have reduced to universal practice. Our dear friend, Mr ——, spied the defect I hint at; and when his mealy-mouthed companion would not indeed have concealed it, but rather have enlarged upon what was valuable, "Truly," says he, "I do not see why we should not speak boldly, and bear our testimony, though it make the ears of the hearers to tingle." He is cut out for a champion in the cause of our blessed Lord; very sensible, and much of the gentleman: bold too as a lion, he breathes defiance against the world and hell. Confiding in his almighty Master, he fears neither the scourge of the tongue, nor the pomp of power.

Please to present my affectionate compliments to Mr C—— and to Mr G——. I need not solicit a

place in their or your daily intercessions, because I am persuaded neither of you can withhold so needful a piece of charity. Accept my best wishes, to which I join my earnest prayers for your health, your comfort, and happiness; and believe me, as I am, my dear doctor, your truly affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER LIX.

Weston-Favell, Aug. 30. 1749.

We have seen marvellous things to-day, said the people of old; and I may truly say, I have read marvellous tidings this evening. What! is —— become a serious and zealous preacher? He that so often filled the scorner's chair, is he transformed into a strenuous advocate for the gospel, and a devoted champion of Christ? Never, surely, was the prophet's exclamation more seasonable, Grace! grace! Zech. iv. 7. How sovereign its power! How superabundant its riches!

I heartily congratulate you, my dear friend, my very dear brother I must call you now, on this change. And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, that he hath counted you faithful, putting you into the ministry. I think the hand of Providence, in conducting this affair, is very visible, and much to be regarded; which must give you no small satisfaction, and tend to work, not the spirit of fear, but of love, and of faith, and of a sound mind.

How honourable is your new office! to be an envoy from the King of heaven! How delightful your province! to be continually conversant in the glorious truths of the gospel, and the unsearchable riches of Christ! How truly gainful your business! to win souls! this is, indeed, an everlasting possession. And how illustrious the reward promised to your faithful service—When the chief Shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away!

May we clearly discern, and never forget, what a

Master we serve! so glorious, that all the angels of light adore him; so gracious, that he spilt his blood even for his enemies; so mighty, that he has all power in heaven and on earth; so faithful, that heaven and earth may pass away, much sooner than one jot or tittle of his word fail. And what is his word, what his engagement to his ministers? Lo, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS. I write it in capitals, because I wish it may be written in our hearts. Go forth, my dear friend, in the strength of this word; and, verily, you shall not be confounded. Plead with your great Lord, plead for the accomplishment of this word, and the gospel shall prosper in your hand. In every exercise of your ministerial duty, act an humble faith on this wonderful word, and the heart of stone shall feel, the powers of hell fall. Would to God I had health and strength, I would earnestly pray for grace, that I might join, vigorously join, in this good warfare. But you know, I am like a bleeding, disabled soldier, and only not slain. I hope, however, I shall rejoice to see my comrades routing the foe, and reaping their laurels; rejoice to see them go on, conquering and to conquer; though no longer able to share, either in the toils or the triumphs of the day.

I believe it will be no easy matter to procure a curate, such as you will like; at least, none such offers to my observation. I heartily wish your valuable friend, Mr ——, that faith in the all-atoning blood of the Lamb, and that comfort in the communications of the Spirit, which may sweetly outbalance the weight of any sorrow, and enable him to rejoice in tribulation!

Remember, now you are a minister of God, that your tongue is to be a well of life: you are to believe in Christ, daily to cherish your faith in Jesus, that out of your heart may flow rivers of living waters; such tides of heavenly and healing truths, as may refresh the fainting soul, and animate its feeble graces.

Please to present my affectionate compliments to Mr C——, and Mr S——; engage their prayers to the Father of compassions in my behalf; and when you yourself draw near to the throne, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, fail not to remember, dear sir, yours sincerely, yours unalterably, &c.

LETTER LX.

Weston-Favell, Sat. evening.

My dear Friend,—This morning I received your parcel, with a ticket full of the affection of your heart, and sprightliness of your temper. My health languishes, but it is a singular mercy that it is not tortured away by racking pains. I would do any thing to repair my constitution, and prolong my life; that, if it should please the divine Providence to renew my strength, I might devote it wholly to his service, and be less unprofitable in my generation. But from what I feel, and yet cannot describe, I have no expectation of this kind.

I am highly delighted with Witsius de Œconomia Fœderum: he is an author exactly suited to my taste; so perspicuous, so elegant, so orthodox. I wish such a treasure had fallen into my hands, when I studied at the university.

I like Mr ——'s spirit, only wish it was a little more evangelical. Let us so act our parts, as, &c. Might not Tully have said the same? has not Seneca said as much? Why should not Christ Jesus be the foundation of our hopes? Is it less rational, less comfortable, to say with St Paul, He that spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

I heartily pity our Staffordshire friend. Cheer him, speak comfortably to him, let not the consideration of his circumstances increase the depression of his spirits. We will never abandon him, nor suffer him to want, so long as we have any thing ourselves.

I said, we will not abandon: But how poor and cold the consolation arising from this succour! What are we? impotence, misery, sin! I believe he loves the Lord Jesus, flies for refuge to the hope set before him (Heb. vi. 18.) in the everlasting righteousness, and perfect atonement of Christ. He may therefore boldly say, and apply to himself those glorious promises—I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee: The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me, Heb. xiii. 5, 6. Present my tender and affectionate compliments to him.

I am glad you have invited to your house that eminent friend of God, and dear friend of yours, the Rev. Mr ——, (for such I know he is.) In so doing, you certainly act the το ἁγιον, and I cannot but think the το πρεπον, even in the judgment of the world. Thus doing, you are in the fashion; for it is a reigning maxim at court, (the court of the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords), "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers." And can there be a more worthy stranger? "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine." You know who it is that says of his faithful ministers, "He that receiveth you, receiveth me." Gracious and adored Redeemer! shall we not receive thee into our houses, who, for our sakes, hadst not where to lay thy blessed head! wast an exile in Egypt; a prisoner at the bar; a corpse in the grave! Pray for me, dear friend, that I may bow my poor head in dutiful resignation to the divine will; that I may bless the hand and kiss the rod that chastises; and love the Lord who takes away the strength of my body, but has given me the blood of his Son. I beseech Mr —— to unite his supplication with yours; for I am fearful lest I should disgrace the gospel in my languishing moments.

Upon a repeated review of the Hints you have wrote to promote the cause of religion, I do not see how to improve them: only exercise your talent; stir up the gift of God by a zealous use, and you yourself

will be the best improver of such hints. O! let us work while the day lasts; the Judge is at the door, and eternity at hand. May we watch and pray always, that we may be found worthy to stand before the Son of man at his coming. I am ever, and most affectionately yours.

LETTER LXI.

My dear Friend,—I am quite ashamed to be found so dilatory in acknowledging your welcome letter; made doubly valuable by bringing with it the judicious observation of Mr ——. Your late favour has hinted a consideration, which will always pass for some excuse with my compassionate friends; and which, so long as this earthly tabernacle is upheld from falling into the dust, I shall always have to allege: I mean, a very languid and disordered state of body. And as I number you amongst my truly compassionate friends, I look upon myself to be acquitted as soon as arraigned.

I entirely agree with Mr ——, in his remarks on my lord bishop's well-meant and pathetic letter. It is pity, and it is strange, that in an earnest exhortation to repentance, no regard should be had to Christ Jesus. Is it not his gift to impotent sinners, who is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins? Is not his precious, but bitter passion, the exciting cause of evangelical repentance; according to the testimony of the prophet, They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn? And can our poor imperfect repentance find favour in the sight of the Lord, unless it be accepted in the Beloved?

I am as much pleased with that ingenious writer's observations on my own little volumes. Let the righteous smite me friendly, and reprove me. With thankfulness I shall receive, with readiness submit to correction. I am very far from thinking Mr —— a sour critic. On the contrary, I admire his candour in transmitting the mistakes to the author himself,

and not trumpeting them abroad to the discredit of the work. I have so high an opinion of his judgment, that if the Father of lights should enable me to finish the small piece I am attempting, I should be extremely glad to have every sheet pass under the correction of so wise and penetrating an observer.

To call Sisera's mother a Midianitish lady, is a most undoubted and palpable blunder. If the divine Providence pleases to give another edition to the book, it shall certainly be altered.

As to the frontispiece, there was great doubt whether I should have any at all. It was first drawn with a direct crucifix, such as is represented in the Romish churches, and almost idolized, I fear, by the Christians of that communion. For this reason, the decoration, though sketched out by my very obliging draughtsman, was wholly omitted in the second edition. Then it was suggested, that a piece of machinery might succeed—be equally expressive, and yet unexceptionable; which is the import of the present figure; our Lord, not pourtrayed in the window, nor exhibited in imagery, but rising from the spot, or miraculously appearing in the place.

With regard to my calling those persons who took up arms against King Charles I. rebels; you know it is the avowed tenet of the Church of England, and the declared sense of our legislators. If I was to alter that expression, especially since it has stood so long, it might probably disgust readers who are in a contrary way of thinking; at least it would give occasion for speculation, and stir up the embers of mutual animosity, which, I hope, are now sleeping, and upon the point of being extinguished. For my part, I look upon King Charles as one of the best men that ever filled a throne; and esteem the Puritans as some of the most zealous Christians that ever appeared in our land. Instead of inveighing against either, I would lament the misfortune of both; that, through some deplorable mismanagement, they knew one another no better, and valued one another no more. Otherwise, how happy might they have been! they,

in so devout a sovereign; he, in such conscientious subjects.

Washing away sins by baptism, is a scriptural expression: "And now," says Ananias to the converted persecutor, "why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." Where, I suppose, washing with water, which is the sign, is put for the application of the Lamb's blood, which is the blessing signified. This, I apprehend, extends to native impurity, as well as committed iniquity, since they both render us children of wrath. Not that it implies an extirpation of original corruption, but refers to its condemning power; which is done away, when the atoning merits of Christ's death are applied and sealed to the soul. Upon the whole, I think the expression is justifiable. Yet, if Mr ——'s remonstrance had come sooner, it should have been more explicit in its meaning, and more guarded from possibility of mistake: And was I called upon to explain my sentiments, I should take leave to borrow Mr ——'s words.

Please to present my most affectionate compliments to him; and let him know, I acknowledge myself obliged to him for his valuable remarks; and shall be still more obliged, if he pleases sometimes to remember me in his effectual fervent prayers; that I may, though weak in body, be strong in faith; giving glory, by a thankful resignation, and comfortable hope, to God our Saviour. I hope he intends to publish his discourse upon the Christian Sabbath. I think such a treatise is not a little wanted. I have seen nothing upon the subject that has given me satisfaction.

Transmit my most cordial affection to good Mr ——; I dearly love him, and rejoice in the expectation of meeting him in the everlasting kingdom of our glorious Redeemer. How inconsiderable, what a perfect nothing, is the difference of preaching in a cloak or in a gown, since we both hold the Head, both are united to the same Saviour, and have access by the same Spirit to the Father. I assure him, his

name has been constantly mentioned in my poor intercessions, ever since he favoured me with his friendly and edifying epistle. Tell him, I am making some faint attempts to recommend to the world a doctrine which is music to his ears, and better than a cordial to his heart—The righteousness of Immanuel, freely imputed to wretched sinners, for their complete justification, and everlasting acceptance. I would also represent, in an amiable and endearing light, that other precious privilege of the gospel, sanctification of our hearts, and newness of life, through the power of the blessed Spirit; and give, if the Lord should enable, a pleasing picture of death, stripped of his horrors, and appearing as an usher, commissioned by the court of heaven, to introduce us before the Prince of the kings of the earth. Beseech my worthy friend to assist me with his prayers to the Father of mercies and Fountain of light, that if I write, it may not be I, but the Spirit of the Lord Jesus that writeth by me, enabling blindness itself to find out acceptable words, and to hit the avenues of pleasure and conviction.

I am glad to hear that the second part of Sunday Thoughts is come abroad. Pray do not fail to let Mr —— have six sets for me before Thursday morning; because he has another parcel to transmit to me this week, in which those may with convenience be enclosed. You have paid me an obliging compliment: beg of the blessed God, dear sir, that I may not be puffed up with vain conceit of myself or my writings. O that earth and ashes, that guilt and sin, should be proud! What so unreasonable? yet what so natural? May the Lord of glory rebuke this arrogant spirit, and teach my soul to be humble, to be ever-more dependent on his aid, as a weaned child.

As to your entering into holy orders, I have no manner of doubt; by all means do it. It is what I have been praying for these several years; it is what all the disciples of Christ are directed to implore at the Lord's hand, that he would send many such

labourers into his vineyard. As God has inclined your heart to the work, as he has given you so clear a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, and stirred you up to be zealous for the interests of a bleeding Saviour; I assure you, if the king would make me a bishop, one of the first acts of my episcopal office should be to ordain the author of Sunday Thoughts. I hope the Lord will guide you with his Spirit, will commission you to feed his flock, and make you a chosen instrument of bringing many sinners to Christ, many sons unto glory. Pray do not think your letters are troublesome; they are always pleasing, always cheering to, dear sir, your very sincere, and truly affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER LXII.

My dear Friend, —— sent me some time ago your translation of Zimmermannus. I was so engaged in urgent business, that I really had not leisure, and so oppressed with bodily weakness, that I had not ability to undertake the office of comparing it with the original. I added my solicitation to yours, and pressed —— to revise, and, if need be, correct the manuscript; and I would beg of you, my dear friend, not to be hasty in publishing. In this affair, I am for following the example of Fabius, *Cunctando restituit rem.*

If I have not been punctual in answering your letter, ascribe it to the usual, which is indeed the true cause; I mean, to a failure of strength, and languor of spirits, which both disincline and disqualify me for every thing. The winter has made me a prisoner. I have not been any farther than the church these two months. May you and all the ministers of the blessed Jesus be anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power! May you, in imitation of our divine Master, go about doing much spiritual good, and shedding abroad the savour of his most precious name. O that I had strength! I would then pray earnestly that I might go and do likewise.

Since it is represented that I have engaged to preface the translation of Zimmermannus, I will not balk the expectations of my valued friend, though I assure you I shall address myself to it with some trepidation; sensible that it will carry too assuming an air, and seem as though, from being an obliged author, I should take upon me to act as dictator, and direct the public in their choice of books.—Yours affectionately, &c.

LETTER LXIII.

My dear Friend,—I received your letter; am sorry to hear you have been ill, heartily wish you a re-establishment of your health, and shall be glad, when it suits your inclination and conveniency, to see you at Weston.

I am glad you are beginning to catechize your children. I hope you will be enabled to feed Christ's lambs, and dispense to them the milk of the word, as they may be able to bear it. Indeed you apply to a wrong person for advice. I make some efforts, it is true, to discharge this duty, but not to my own satisfaction; and great will be the glory of divine grace, if it is to the edification of my people. My time for catechizing is during the summer; when the days are long, and the weather is warm. But I think you do right to conform to the usual custom of catechizing in Lent.

My method is to ask easy questions, and teach the children very short and easy answers. The Lord's prayer was the last subject of our explanation. In some such manner I proceeded:—Why is this prayer called the Lord's prayer? Because our Lord Jesus Christ taught it us. Why is Christ called our Lord? Because he bought us with his blood. Why does he teach us to call God Father? That we may go to him as children to a father. How do children go to a Father? With faith, not doubting but he will give them what they want. Why our Father in

heaven? That we may pray to him with reverence. What is meant by God's name? God himself and all his perfections. What by hallowed? That he may be honoured and glorified. How is God to be honoured? In our hearts, with our tongues, and by our lives, &c. &c.

On each question I endeavour to comprehend, not all that may be said, but that only which may be most level to their capacities, and is most necessary for them to know. The answer to each question I explain in the most familiar manner possible; such a manner, as a polite hearer might perhaps treat with the most sovereign contempt. Little similes I use, that are quite low, fetched *non ex academia, sed e trivio*. In every explanation I would be short, but repeat it again and again. Tautology, in this case, is the true propriety of speaking: and to our little auditors, the *crambe repetita* will be better than all the graces of eloquence.

I propose to explain to them principally the creed, the Lord's prayer, and the commandments. What relates to the two sacraments, at present, I do not attempt to set before them; let them first have some tolerable notion of the former. I fancy you had better proceed in the same method. If I know your sentiments about baptism aright, with which our catechism begins, I should apprehend it would be most prudent to go immediately to the great fundamentals. However, pray to the Lord, whose work you work; and he who is all-wise will direct you, he who is all-powerful will prosper you. Pray give my very affectionate compliments to ——. Through the everlasting righteousness of our Redeemer, I hope to meet them in the world of glory; and there he that is feeble will be as David. Yours sincerely, &c.

LETTER LXIV.

Weston-Favell, April 5. 1750.

DEAR SIR,—WHEN you meditate on Hosea iv. 6, 7. [namely, "My people are destroyed for

lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children. As they were increased, so they sinned against me; therefore will I change their glory into shame;"] when, I say, you meditate on this terrifying text, compare it with Hosea xi. 8, 9.; xiii. 9. 12.; xiv. 1, 2. [namely, "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim; for I am God, and not man, the Holy One in the midst of thee,"] Hosea xi. 8, 9.

In the next passage, Christ shews the only remedy for our misery; [namely, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in ME is thine help. The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up, his sin is hid,"] Hosea xiii. 9. 12.

In the last passage is prescribed the method of applying the remedy to your own soul, [namely, "O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord; say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously; so will we render the calves of our lips,"] (or spiritual sacrifices of the heart, not calves with horns and hoofs), Hosea xiv. 1, 2.

Pray take these texts into frequent consideration, or else you will do a THREEFOLD injury, viz. to the divine mercies; to the Redeemer's merits; to your own comfort.

Be it that guilt is great; yet, is it boundless? is it infinite like the kindness of God through Christ? Remember what message our Lord sent to Peter after his fall; what offers he made at Jerusalem after it had murdered the Prince of peace; how eminently useful and happy he made David, after the commis-

sion of enormous crimes. He is the same gracious, long-suffering, sin-forgiving God, to-day, yesterday, and for ever.

Beware, dear sir, that you add not unbelief (the greatest of sins, the most provoking of sins, the most destructive of sins) to all your other offences. We have trampled upon the divine laws, and defiled our own souls; but let us not charge the divine declaration with FALSEHOOD, let us not make God a LIAR. I am sure God loves you, and Christ intercedes for you; else whence this searching of your heart, this acknowledgment of guilt, this self-condemnation, and thirst after pardoning and sanctifying grace.

Another proof, to me a very evident and pregnant proof, that the blessed God has a very tender and particular concern for your eternal welfare, is his disconcerting your schemes; than which nothing, I think, could be more effectually calculated to waft you along the smooth stream of insensibility and pleasure into the pit of perdition.

Let this, though a thorn in the flesh, be a token for good. He that has begun to rescue you will accomplish his gracious purpose. Ere long I trust this new song will be put into your mouth, "The snare is broken, and I am delivered," Psal. cxxiv. 7. Be of good comfort, dear sir, for with the Lord there is mercy and plenteous redemption, Psal. cxxx. 7.

Read by way of consolation Manasseh's humiliation, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 13. And see likewise God's gracious dealings, even with Rehoboam himself, 2 Chron. xii. 6, 7.

Do not indulge dispiriting ideas, or have hard thoughts of the God of everlasting compassion: Oh how weak is our faith! Read and study well that excellent and comfortable little tract, *Liborius* Zimmermannus de eminentia cognitionis Christi.* Converse with some experienced Christians, and remember what our blessed Saviour has promised, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there

* See Letter LXXII.

am I in the midst of them. We never make any doubt but our friends (especially if they be the distinguished servants of Jesus) will fulfil their promises; yet we question (fie upon us, fie upon us for our unbelief) whether the divine Master himself will accomplish his word!

I am, dear sir, with much esteem, and with much concern for your present and eternal welfare, yours very sincerely, &c.

LETTER LXV.

Weston-Favell, May 27. 1750.

DEAR SISTER,—THE country is now in its perfection. Every bush a nosegay, all the ground a piece of embroidery; on each tree the voice of melody, in every grove a concert of warbling music. The air is enriched with native perfumes, and the whole creation seems to smile. Such a pleasing improving change has taken place; because, as the Psalmist expresses it, God has sent forth his Spirit, and renewed the face of the earth. Such a refining change takes place in mankind, when God is pleased to send his Holy Spirit into the heart. Let us therefore humbly and earnestly seek the influences of this divine Spirit. All our sufficiency is from this divine Spirit dwelling in our hearts, and working in us both to will and to do. Without his aids, we are nothing, we have nothing, we can do nothing. Would we believe in Christ to the saving of our souls? we must receive power from on high, and be enabled by this divine Spirit; for no man can say, that Jesus is the Lord, or exercise true faith on his merits, but by the Holy Ghost? Would we be made like unto Christ? It can be done only by this divine Spirit. We are transformed into the same image, says the apostle, not by any ability of our own, but by the Spirit of the Lord. Would we be set on the right hand of our Judge at the last day? This is the mark that will distinguish us from

the reprobates, and number us with his faithful people. For unless a man, unless a woman, have the Spirit of Christ, they are none of his. But, since we infinitely need this enlightening and sanctifying Spirit, is the God of heaven equally willing to give it? He is; indeed he is. To obtain this gift for us sinners, his own Son bled to death on the cross. That we may be made partakers of this gift, he interceded at the right hand of his Father; and he has passed his word, he has given us a solemn promise, that if we ask, we shall receive it. See, remember, and often plead in prayer, Luke xi. 13. From your affectionate brother, &c.

LETTER LXVI.

June 28. 1750.

My dear Friend,—If you chide, I must accuse. Pray where was your warrant, where your commission to impress me into this journey? However, as becomes a good Christian, I forgive you and your accomplice ———.

At St Alban's I was weary and dispirited; was loth, could not prevail on myself to desire Dr Cotton's company at the inn, and was scarce able to crawl to his house. Believe me, I sincerely honour, and cordially love, the worthy doctor. Though I am naturally shy, I should want no solicitations to wait on so very ingenious and improving a friend; a pleasure I promise myself, if Providence brings me back alive. We got to London about three o'clock on Saturday. I took up my lodgings, not at my brother's after the flesh, but with the brother of my heart. On Sunday he preached with his usual fervour, and administered the sacrament to a great number of very serious communicants. He delights in the work of the ministry, and embraces every opportunity of preaching the everlasting gospel. He is indeed in labours more abundant. Dear sir, what a pattern of zeal, and ministerial fidelity,

is our excellent friend! and God rewards him with joy unspeakable. God also fulfils to him, in a remarkable manner, his gracious promise, "They that honour me, I will honour." This day he was most respectfully entertained at the houses of two noblemen. What a most exalted satisfaction must he enjoy in attending these great personages, not to cringe for favours, but to lay upon them an everlasting obligation; not to ask their interests at court, but to be the minister of their reconciliation to the King of kings! Thus far was wrote on Sunday night, but was hindered from finishing soon enough for the post.—*Monday morning:* Yesterday our indefatigable friend renewed his labour of love, and with such assiduity, that I had not spirits to attend what he had strength to execute. He preached to a crowded audience, and yet multitudes went away for want of room. In the midst of this audience was a clergyman in his canonical dress, a stranger; his name I could not learn; he behaved with exemplary seriousness, and expressed much satisfaction. One day last week I was most agreeably surprised. Drinking tea at a friend's house, a person knocked at the door; the servant brought word that it was a stranger, who desired to speak with Mr Hervey. And who do you think it was? One whom I tenderly love, but never expected to see again. It was the accomplished and amiable Mr ——. We took sweet counsel together at Gaius, mine host's, and wished one another a happy meeting in the world of glory. My fellow-traveller saw your letter, and bid me tell you, that if you are chained to the oar, the chains are of your own making. Dear sir, preach the glorious gospel. Be an ambassador of the most high God. Devote yourself to this most important, most noble service, and your divine Master, I hope, will furnish you with employ, and open a door for your usefulness. The fruit of such labours will abide, and our friend is a proof in what peace, in what joy, they are sown. My animal nature is so very, very

feeble, that I find no benefit from the change of air, nor from the enjoyment of the most pleasing society. Ever yours, &c.

LETTER LXVII.

London, Sept. 4. 1750.

DEAR SIR,—OUR dear friend —— is much engaged in making interest to succeed the minister of ——, who, though not stone dead, is ill enough to alarm the hopes of neighbouring preachers. O that we may every one contend who shall bring most glory to the crucified King of heaven, and love most ardently his all-gracious and infinitely amiable Majesty! A strife this, which will not foment, but destroy malignant passions; in which strife angels will be our competitors, honour and joy the everlasting prize.

I wish our dear friend H—— the rich anointings of God's Spirit in composing, and the powerful presence of God's Spirit in delivering his infirmary sermon. My most cordial love is ever his, and ever yours.

Thank you I do sincerely, for your prayers to God in my behalf; and oh how shall I thank sufficiently him who procured access for us through his blood! We often remember you, and wish and pray that you may be a burning and a shining light in your generation. Dear friend, adieu.

LETTER LXVIII.

Sept. 11. 1750.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I RECEIVED your last favour. It was without date, but very welcome. We have lost our zealous friend for several days. He has been displaying the banner of the gospel at ——, and gathering together the dispersed of Israel. We admire the hero that wins battles, takes towns, and leaves trophies of his victories in every place. But

where will all such toils, and the very remembrance of them be, when the monuments of his labours endure for ever in heaven?

Thanks for your subscription: I have procured more of another friend. I shall soon be a poor man, here are so many necessitous objects. And who can bear to be in affluence, while so many fellow-creatures are in deplorable want? Especially if we remember him, who, though he was rich, for our sake became poor; and had not where (O marvellous, marvellous abasement!) had not where to lay his head.

This night dear Mr —— is with us; returned from his expedition, full of life, and rich with spoils; spoils won from the kingdom of darkness, and consecrated to the Captain of our salvation. I have been prevailed on to sit for my picture. If ever portrait was the shadow of a shadow, mine is such. O that I may be renewed after the amiable image of the blessed Jesus! and when I awake up after his likeness, I shall be satisfied with it: This wish is breathed in a language to me unusual. I generally comprehend my dear friend in such petitions, and make his eternal interests inseparable from my own.

On Sunday I heard the admired Mr ——. His text was Rom. v. 1.; his doctrine evangelical. The faith which purifies the heart, and works by love; the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, comprehending both his active and passive obedience; the operation of the blessed Spirit in producing this sound and lively faith, were the substance of his discourse. I commit you, my dear friend, to the tender mercies of our God, and the powerful word of his grace; remaining inviolably yours, &c.

LETTER LXIX.

London, Oct. 23. 1750.

My dear Friend,—As your stay in town was so short, we could not expect to see you. On

Sunday afternoon your old acquaintance Mr —— called upon me, sat about an hour, inquired after you, and talked as became the Christian character, and the sacred day. The conversation was perfectly pleasing; but the subjects, whether we were led to them by chance, or directed to them by Providence, were peculiarly noble and important. "I know that my Redeemer liveth," &c. Job xix. "Behold my servant shall deal prudently," &c. Isa. lii. We expect to see our dear friend —— in a little time. O that we may meet each other, and daily converse on the fulness of the blessings of the gospel of peace! I say no more about poor Mrs ——; perhaps my concern for her may be uncommonly tender, because there have few days passed since I knew her, in which I have not made mention of her name in my prayers for the afflicted. May the God of wisdom teach you, and the God of power enable you, to do always such things as are acceptable in his sight, through Jesus Christ. And may the Father of compassions make her sorrows bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and issue in everlasting joy! I hope the truly valuable Dr —— and his family took knowledge of you, that you had been with Christ. Let us study, let us labour, to spread abroad the savour of his blessed name, who suffered the vengeance due to all—to all our sins. That his presence may be with you, and his love be in you, is the invariable wish of your affectionate, &c.

LETTER LXX.

London, Nov. 15. 1750.

My dear Friend,—I have communicated your two messages to ——; he is now with his old acquaintance at ——. On Sunday he preached morning and afternoon at L—— church. May his word prove a seed of life and immortality to the hearers. On Tuesday he and Mr —— breakfasted with us: the talk turned principally upon the mystic writers.

Dr —— began to warm a little to hear Mr —— inveigh pretty sharply against them; but by giving a soft answer, and making considerable concessions in their behalf, Mr —— cooled and qualified all. He spoke with remarkable command of temper, and, I think, with great solidity of judgment. I wish it may lessen our valuable friend H——'s attachment to those authors, which I believe is immoderate, and I fear is pernicious. I heartily wish your children may recover, and live to be a comfort to their father, an honour to their religion. I have received Dr D——'s remarks; very judicious, and equally faithful. I scarce know any friend who has so true a taste, and so much sincerity. *Fiet Aristarchus* is the character he deserves.

Yesterday a serious dissenter from the country came to see me. God had freed him from a spirit of bigotry, and made my book acceptable to him. O that we may all love one another, and bear with one another! so fulfil the law, and follow the example of Christ. In the new Jerusalem, that city of the living God, all our little differences of opinion, as well as all the remainders of corruption, will fall off. In the light of God's countenance we shall see the truth clearly, and enjoy the life, the life of heaven and eternity perfectly. O that we may love that amiable and adorable Being every day, every hour, more and more! who, though the King immortal and invisible, gave his own Son to bleed and die for worms, for rebels; for you, my dear friend, and for your unworthy, but truly affectionate, &c.

LETTER LXXI.

Nov. 27. 1750.

My dear Friend,—Present my very grateful acknowledgments to our obliging friend Mr ——. I rejoice in his lines, as they are a pledge of his affection and friendship; but I really am under apprehensions from them, as they are to be a public

encomium on my character, lest they should make me think more highly of myself than I ought to think. O! may the high and lofty One, who inhabits eternity, and dwells with the humble heart, vouchsafe to defend me from all the insinuations of pride. To be sure this is a trying occasion; for *laudari a laudatis* is no common honour. I would beg leave to postpone the publication of the verses till the mezzotinto plate is finished, and the print ready to be sold; because, if such a recommendation appears at such a juncture, I am persuaded it will cause a demand for the picture, and further its sale. Good heavens! who would ever have thought that so mean a name, and so obscure a person, should appear in the world with such an air of significancy? O that it may be for the glory of that ever blessed and adorable Being, who manifests his transcendent excellency most chiefly in shewing mercy. When you heard of ——'s death, did you not immediately think of the prophet's declaration, "All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field?" Did you not also ardently desire and resolve to seek for an assured interest in the promises of that word which endureth for ever? May the God of grace seal those promises to our hearts by his blessed Spirit, and witness with our spirits that we are the objects of his love and heirs of his kingdom? Then we may defy death, and boldly bid the king of terrors do his worst. —— is making an excursion to —— and to ——. May the Lord God of Hosts go forth with his servant, and make him terrible to the infernal enemy, as an army with banners; welcome to poor sinners, as the refreshing dews after parching heat. How my soul longs to be employed in the same sacred, blessed cause! Does not yours also throb with the same desires? I can no more. Supper waits for me. Adieu. All spiritual blessings be multiplied upon you, and ever yours, &c.

LETTER LXXII.

December 8. 1750.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—WHY do you say Zimmermannus is too comfortable for you? The comfort of Christianity is, the sweet allurement to draw us to heaven, and the powerful instrument to fit us for heaven. If our affections are attached to the world, the comfort of Christianity is ordained to wean us from its vanities, and win us to God. If we have sinned, the love of the Lord Jesus Christ is the most sovereign means of wounding our hearts, and bringing us to repentance. When Nathan said unto David, "The Lord hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die;" then it is supposed he penned the 32d psalm, and poured out his soul in unreserved confession. When the blessed Jesus turned and looked upon Peter, then his conscience smote him deep; then he went out, and wept bitterly. And how did his dear Master look? was it a resentful, upbraiding, menacing glance? Quite the reverse. Is this your promised fidelity? this your kindness for your friend? Ah, Peter! Peter! I feel more from your perfidy than from all the insults of my enemies. But I know your weakness, and I am going to die for your guilt. Willingly, willingly I lay down my life, that this sin may never be laid to your charge.—Such was the language of that gracious look. I do not wonder that it fetched a flood of tears from his eyes. I find it impossible to refrain on the bare meditation on it. O that the adorable Redeemer may manifest his all-forgiving goodness in our souls, and sure it will overcome our most stubborn corruptions. What can withstand such heavenly love? I know ——; and think you have a peculiar privilege in having opportunity and ability to succour so sincere a Christian. He will more than repay you with his prayers. Whatsoever you do for him, I am persuaded will be done unto Christ. And who can

do enough for him who despised the shame, and endured the cross for us? Your writing paper came safe; and I would have returned it to the stationer as too coarse, but has, since its arrival, been seized; seized in the king's name, by one of the king's officers. Pray, have you taken care to pay duty? have you not been deficient in some instance or other? O, said Gaius mine host, when he heard of its coming back, It is good enough for me; it will just suit my purpose; I wanted such a supply: so it is in his hands, to be employed in the service of a great King, whose name you can guess, whose goodness you have experienced, and for whose honour, I hope, we shall all be very zealous. What say you? will you turn the forfeiture into a free gift, by sending your full consent to the deed? Our dear friend has been visited with a fever; attended by the doctor every day this week; but, blessed be God! is, we trust, upon the eve of a thorough recovery. He talks of preaching to-morrow, but I shall use my utmost interest to dissuade him. Let him desist for a while, that he may persist for a long season. We have but a small share of ——'s company. O that we may meet where we shall part no more, sin no more! Adieu! Ever yours, &c.

LETTER LXXIII.

Dec. 20. 1750.

My very dear Friend,—Your letter found me, after a considerable delay in its passage, where do you think? Where I never expected to go any more; found me at London! From whence I write this, and return you my sincerest thanks. Prevailed on by the repeated importunity of my friends, I came by easy stages to town, in order to try whether change of air may be of any service to my decayed constitution; for my worthy physician Dr S—— has declared, that nothing which he can prescribe is likely to administer any relief.

I have reason to be convinced, from the accounts which your letter brings, and from the reports which I receive in this place, that here we have no continuing city. Thanks, everlasting thanks to the divine Goodness, which has prepared for us a mansion, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; a mansion whose builder, whose maker, and whose glory is God. Not only the disappointment, but even the acquisition of our desires, bespeaks the emptiness of the world. But what a complete felicity, what an all-satisfying portion, will the enjoyment of God be! When I awake up after thy likeness, (and am admitted to stand in thy beatific presence), I shall be satisfied with it.

I pitied as I read poor Miss ———'s case. There cannot be a keener distress than a conscience that is awakened, and a heart that desponds. The spirit of a man will sustain his other infirmities, but a wounded spirit who can bear? A wounded spirit was the bitterest ingredient even in the cup of our Lord's exquisitely severe sufferings. He that bore the racking tortures of crucifixion without a complaint, cried lamentably, wept blood, when the arrows of the Almighty were within him. Then his soul was sorrowful, exceeding sorrowful, sorrowful even unto death. This dejection of our adored Master should be our consolation, his agonies are our ease; he was deeply sorrowful that we might be always rejoicing. To believe that he was wounded for our sins, and bruised for our iniquities; that he was destitute, afflicted, tormented for our sake; that by his vicarious and most meritorious obedience unto death, he has obtained everlasting redemption for us; firmly to believe this is not arrogance, is not presumption, but our bounden duty, as well as our inestimable privilege. This is his command, says St John, that we believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ. Never, never was any command more gracious, or more worthy to be written on the tables of our hearts. Let us not, my dear Mr ——, by indulging unbelief,

O let us not dishonour the boundless mercy, and the inviolable fidelity of God; let us not depreciate the infinite merits, and all-prevailing intercession of our blessed Mediator; but say with the lively poet, Dr Watts, in his Hymns,

> O! for a strong, a lasting faith,
> To credit what the Almighty saith!
> To embrace the promise of his Son,
> And call the joys of heaven our own!

You inquire about my new work intended for the press. It is a great uncertainty whether my languid spirits, and enfeebled constitution, will permit me to execute my design. It is a pleasure, however, to hear that I am sometimes admitted to converse with you by my book. May the divine Spirit accompany every such conversation; and teach our souls to glow with gratitude to that transcendently great and gracious Being who stretched out the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; who stretched out his arms on the cursed tree, and laid the foundation of our happiness in his own blood. Please to present my most respectful compliments to Mrs ——, your worthy neighbour Mr ——, and his nieces. Give me leave, instead of wishing you a merry Christmas, to wish them and you all that joy which the holy prophet felt, when, in an ecstasy of delight, he cried out, "To us a child is born! to us a Son is given!" All the glories of heaven unite in his wonderful person; all the blessings of time and eternity are the fruit of his precious incarnation. Adieu, my dear sir, and cease not to pray for your ever affectionate, &c.

LETTER LXXIV.

London, Dec. 22. 1750.

My dear Friend,—Be so kind as to let your servant look out for some person of Collingtree, and deliver to him the inclosed letter. He will probably find some such person on Monday at ——; and

I would have the letter conveyed by Christmas, that it may furnish my people with matter for conversation at their hospitable meetings. Our excellent friend follows the advice of the Preacher—whatsoever, of a charitable or godly nature, his hand findeth to do, he does it with his might; as one that is deeply convinced that there is no wisdom nor device in the grave, whither we all are hasting. Does not so amiable a person, such an indefatigable servant of Christ, such a compassionate friend to mankind, does not he deserve encouragement?

We have just been to hear a very excellent discourse upon Zech. iv. 7. Mr ——, who made one of the congregation, sends his compliments to you, and to Dr ——; which when you present, be pleased to add mine. Who do you think I lately drank tea with? The two ladies before whom you put me so extremely to the blush. May neither they nor I be put to everlasting shame and confusion. I did what was in my power to prevent it, by recommending that adorable Saviour to their affections, in whom whosoever believeth shall not be ashamed. They commissioned me to transmit their compliments to you. You have thanks and prayers (the reward which a prophet gives) for the writing paper. What account can you give us of Lady ———'s health? Never, never will the physician's skill be employed for the lengthening of a more valuable life. May Almighty Goodness bless those prescriptions, and command her constitution and our zeal, ἀνάθαλλειν!—Ever yours, &c.

LETTER LXXV.

Dec. 29. 1750.

My dear Friend,—This time last week I took pen in hand to beg; now I should be ungrateful if I did not resume it, in order to return my thanks, which I do most sincerely, in my own name, and on the behalf of my excellent host. He is now engaged

in company, and cannot possibly steal a quarter of an hour to make his acknowledgments. The limner has been with me twice, and is to give the finishing touches on Monday. How slowly, and how patiently, these artists advance! A pattern for us. So may we have the image of the amiable Jesus gradually instamped on our hearts, till death gives the finishing stroke, and makes us completely like our Beloved. In the mean time, we have need of patience. Patience must be exercised towards ourselves; and God, the blessed God, is unspeakably patient towards us all. Mr —— is willing to undertake Zimmermannus. I would have it thrown into the form of a dialogue. Why do you entertain such harsh thoughts of the dearest, most benign, and gracious of all beings? I can no more.—Ever yours, &c.

LETTER LXXVI.

DEAR SIR,—I RETURN you thanks for the perusal of your pamphlets. Be pleased to accept the two little volumes which accompany your other books, as an expression of my gratitude to your pen, and sincere affection to your person. May I request the favour of you, good sir, sometimes to implore the blessing of a gracious God upon the author, and his weak attempts: that the one may walk suitably to his holy profession, and high calling; that the other may please the reader for his good to edification. This will be a singular favour, and shall be readily returned by, reverend sir, your affectionate friend and humble servant, &c.

LETTER LXXVII.

London, Dec. 24. 1750.

DEAR MR NIXON,—I AM ashamed to see so obliging a letter from so valuable a friend lie so long unanswered. I delayed my grateful acknowledgments to you on this subject, till I could see

what would be the issue of our design. As you propose to recommend my picture by your ingenious verses, I should rather chuse to have them inserted (with your permission) in the magazines and public papers, than to have them affixed to the copper-plate. This practice, though once customary, is now, I believe, seldom used; and for me to revive it, when it does me such distinguished credit, would be too vain-glorious; otherwise, I assure you, dear sir, I should be glad to have a memorial of our friendship engraved on brass, or a more durable metal. And give me leave to declare, that though I was exceedingly pleased with the character you gave of my book in your excellent anniversary sermon, yet I was much more delighted with your acknowledging me as your friend, and suffering it to be known that I have a share in your affection.

I propose to make a long stay in town, and shall promise myself the pleasure of your company at my brother's. Have you ever met with a little poem, entitled Sunday Thoughts? The author is a very worthy man, and the poem not beneath your regard. Shall I wish my worthy friend a merry Christmas? This compliment will be paid you by multitudes. Rather let me wish that Christ Jesus, the ever blessed Immanuel, may be formed in both our hearts! Renewed after his amiable and divine image, may you see many revolving happy new-years below, and at last have an abundant entrance into the new Jerusalem, which is above. Breathing such wishes, I remain, dear sir, your much obliged, and very affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER LXXVIII.

London, Jan. 3. 1751.

DEAR SISTER,—I HAVE taken my pen in hand to write to you, and yet have no news to transmit. I have nothing to send but my good wishes, and my best advice.

The old year is gone; and if we look back, what a nothing it appears! Departed as a tale that is told. Thus will our whole life appear, when our end approaches, and eternity opens: but eternity will never expire; eternity will last world without end. When millions, unnumbered millions of ages are passed away, eternity will only be beginning. And this short life, this little span is the seed-time of the long, long eternity. What we sow in this state, we shall reap in the eternal state. Should we not therefore be careful, very careful, to improve our time, and make the best provision for an eternity of happiness? Should we not be careful to get faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; to get the love of God shed abroad in our hearts; and our souls renewed according to the amiable example of our blessed Redeemer? This, and nothing but this, is true religion. Going to church, hearing sermons, and receiving sacraments, profit us nothing, unless they promote these desirable ends. Fix, dear sister, this truth in your memory: A true faith in Christ, an unfeigned love of God, and a real holiness of heart, are the greatest blessings you can desire. Without them we shall not, we cannot, enter into the kingdom of heaven. These you should incessantly, you should earnestly seek, through the whole advancing year; and these I most sincerely wish you, who am your very affectionate brother, &c.

LETTER LXXIX.

London, Feb. 5. 1751.

DEAR MRS ——, I RECEIVED your valuable letter, and thank you for it. I am exceeding glad, and bless the unspeakable goodness of God, if he has made my poor ministry in any degree serviceable or comfortable to your soul. I accompany my former labours (if such extremely feeble attempts may be called labours) with my repeated prayers; and bear my little flock on my supplicating and

affectionate heart all the day long. O that the gracious God may fulfil in them all the good pleasure of his will, and the work of faith with power!

I rejoice to find that you know the truth. May you know it more and more; be established in it, and experience the efficacy of it. May the truth make you free! free from the prevalence of unbelief, the dominion of sin, and the oppression of sorrow! Give glory to God for opening the eyes of your mind, and bringing you to the riches of Christ. Take to yourself the comfort of this inestimable blessing, and by no means reject your own mercy. Pray do not harbour hard thoughts concerning the blessed God, nor cherish desponding apprehensions concerning yourself, though always frail, and in every respect imperfect. The great and good Father of our spirits knows whereof we are made: he remembers that we are but dust; and will not be extreme to mark what is done amiss. Extreme to mark! so far from it, that to those who seek him in sincerity, seek him through his dear Son, he is tender and compassionate beyond all imagination. "As a father pitieth his own children, so is the Lord merciful unto them that fear him," Psalm ciii. 13.; and "as a mother comforteth her son, so will the Lord thy God comfort thee," Isa. lxvi. 13. Since we want loving-kindness and mercy to follow us all the days of our life, blessed, for ever blessed be the God of heaven, in these he delighteth, Jer. ix. 24.

O "cast thy burden upon the Lord," says the Holy Spirit. Cast it upon the Lord Jesus Christ. This is an art which the Christian should be diligent to learn and watchful to practise. Christ is a Saviour, but we neglect to make use of him: we are come to him, but we forget to walk in him. When guilt accuses us, or guilt overtakes us, instantly let us fly to Christ, as the Israelites, when wounded, looked to the brazen serpent. There, let us say, there is the propitiation for this abominable sin. For this, and for all my other iniquities, his heart was pierced,

and his blood spilt. The vials of wrath, due to my provocations, were poured upon that spotless victim; and by his stripes I am healed. If our own obedience is deplorably defective, so that we are sometimes ready to cry out with the prophet, "My leanness! my leanness! woe is me!" let us turn our thoughts to the great Mediator's righteousness: this is consummate and divine; this was wrought out for us; this is imputed to us; in this all the seed of Israel shall be justified, and in this should they glory. If your prayers are dull and languid, remember the intercession of Christ. He ever appears in the presence of God for you; and how can your cause miscarry which has such an advocate? If the poor widow was heard, even by the unjust judge, shall not the dearly beloved Son of God prevail when he makes intercession to a most gracious Father? a Father who loves both him and his people. If you want repentance, want faith, want holiness, Christ is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, and to give all these desirable blessings. He has ascended up on high, has led captivity captive, and received gifts, spiritual gifts for men, yea, even for his enemies, for the rebellious. It is his office to bestow these precious graces on poor sinners; and he is as ready to execute this office as the mother is ready to administer the breast to a sucking child. Do you read the Scriptures? Still keep Christ in view. When dreadful threatenings occur, say, These I deserved; but Christ has bore them in my stead. When rich promises are made, say, Of these I am unworthy; but my Redeemer's worthiness is my plea; he has purchased them for me by his merits. All the promises of God are yea and amen (sure and certain to the believing soul) in Christ Jesus.

To make such a perpetual application of Christ, is to eat his flesh, and drink his blood. Thus may you, may I, may all my dear people, be enabled to pass the time of our sojourning here below! deriving our whole spiritual life, our pardon and sanctifica-

tion, our hope, and our joy, from that inexhaustible fountain of all good. Though I am not with you in person, I am often with you in spirit; and daily commit you to the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls; who is ten thousand thousand times more condescending, compassionate, and faithful, than your truly affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER LXXX.

DEAR ——, I RECEIVED your kind letter, and am glad to find that you, and Mrs ——, and Mrs ——, often meet together, and, like the people mentioned by the prophet, speak one to another of the things of God. O let us exhort one another to faith, to love, and to good works; and so much the more, as we see the day, the day of eternal judgment, approaching. Ere long we shall hear the shout of the archangel, and the trump of God. O let us imitate the wise virgins, and get oil in our lamps, true grace in our hearts; that we may be prepared for our Lord's second coming, and not dread, but love his appearing.

My departure from Northampton was sudden and unexpected. Could I have seen my people, and given them my parting advice, it should have been in the words of that good man Barnabas, who exhorted all the disciples, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

Cleave, my dear friends, to the Lord Jesus Christ; cleave to his word; let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, and be your meditation all the day long. Let the Bible, that inestimable book, be often in your hands, and its precious truths be ever in your thoughts. Thus let us sit, with holy Mary, at the feet of Jesus; and, I hope, we shall experience his word to drop as the rain, and distil as the dew.

Cleave to his merits. Fly to his divine blood for pardon; it is the fountain opened for sin, and for uncleanness. It purges from all guilt, takes away

all sin, and, blessed be God, it is always open, always free of access. Fly to his righteousness. Let us renounce our own, and rely on his obedience. What unprofitable servants are we! how slothful in our whole life! how imperfect in every work! But as for Christ, his work is perfect; it is complete, and infinitely meritorious. In this shall all the seed of Israel, all true believers, be justified; and in this shall they glory.

Cleave to his Spirit. Seek for the divine Spirit; cry mightily to God for the divine Spirit. Let them that have it pray that they may have it more abundantly, and be even filled with the Spirit. This blessed Spirit reveals Christ, strengthens faith, quickens love, and purifies the heart. Christ died to obtain this Spirit for us; he intercedes for us that we may receive it; and his heavenly Father, for his sake, has promised to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask it. He has promised (O glorious privilege!) to give it more readily than a parent gives bread to a hungry child.

Cleave to his example. Study his holy life, eye his unblamable conduct, observe his amiable tempers; look to this heavenly pattern, as those that learn to write look to their copy; and God grant that we all, beholding with open face the glory of the Lord, may be changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord!

Thus let us cleave to Christ the Lord; cleave with full purpose of heart, incessantly, closely, inseparably. Let us say with our father Jacob, I will not let thee go. Let us imitate the Syrophœnician woman, whom no discouragements could divert from her purpose. Temptations, difficulties, all the assaults of our enemy, should make us hasten to, and abide in the strong-hold, the city of refuge: And he has promised, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." He will gather us with his arm, and lay us in his bosom. He will guide us by his grace, and

receive us into his glory. There, in those happy, happy mansions, may we, and many, very many of my dear flock meet, and never be parted more! This is the heart's desire, and the daily prayer of their and your truly affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER LXXXI.

1751.

DEAR ——, AND are you very weak? is sickness in the chamber, and death at the door? Come, then, let us both sit down with dissolution and eternity in view, and encourage one another from the word, the precious word of God. I have as much need of such consolation as you, my dear friend, and may, perhaps, have occasion to use them as soon.

What is there formidable in death, which our ever blessed Redeemer has not taken away? Do the pangs of dissolution alarm us? Should they be sharp, they cannot be very long; and our exalted Lord, with whom are the issues of death, knows what dying agonies mean. He has said, in the multitude of his tender mercies, "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness," Isa. xli. 10. This promise authorizes us to say boldly, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff comfort me," Psalm xxiii. 4.

Are we afraid to enter into a strange, invisible, unknown world? It is the world into which our divine Master is gone; where he has prepared everlasting mansions for his people, John xiv. 2. Luke xvi. 22. and has appointed his angels to conduct us thither. Having such a convoy, what should we dread? and, going to our eternal home, where our all-bountiful Redeemer is, why should we be reluctant?

Are we concerned on account of what we leave? We leave the worse to possess the better. If we leave our earthly friends, we shall find more loving and lovely companions. We shall be admitted among the "innumerable company of angels, and to the general assembly and church of the first-born, that are written in heaven," Heb. xii. 22, 23. Do we leave the ordinances of religion, which we have attended with great delight? leave the word of God, which has been sweeter to our souls than honey to our mouths? We shall enter into the temple not made with hands, and join that happy choir, who rest not day nor night, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come," Rev. iv. 8. And if our Bible is no more, we shall have all that is promised, we shall behold all that is described therein. If we drop the map of our heavenly Canaan, it will be to take possession of its blissful territories. "That city has no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God does lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof," Rev. xxi. 23. O, my friend! blessed, for ever blessed, be the grace of our God, and the merits of his Christ! We shall exchange the scanty stream for the boundless ocean; and if we no longer pick the first ripe grapes, we shall gather the copious, the abounding, the never-ending vintage.

Do we fear the guilt of our innumerable sins? Adored be the inexpressible loving-kindness of God our Saviour! our sins have been punished in the blessed Jesus: "The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all, Isa. liii. 6. He his own self bare our sins, in his own body, on the tree, 1 Pet. ii. 24. So that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," Rom. viii. 1. O that we may be enabled, with the apostle, to make our boast of this Saviour, and to triumph in this faith! "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even

at the right hand of God; who also maketh intercession for us."

Is judgment the thing that we fear? To the pardoned sinner it has nothing terrible. The Lord Jesus, who keeps his servants from falling, "presents them also faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy," Jude ver. 24. Observe the sweet expressions, *presents faultless*, and *with exceeding joy*. Justly therefore does the apostle reckon it among the privileges of the Christians, that they are come to God the Judge of all, Heb. xii. 23.; for the Judge is our friend, the Judge is our advocate, the Judge is our propitiation, the Judge is our righteousness. And is it not a privilege to come to such a Judge as will not so much as mention our iniquities to us, but condescend to take notice of our poor unworthy services? who sits on the great tribunal, not to pass the sentence of damnation upon us, but to give us a reward, a reward of free grace, and of inconceivable richness?

Let me conclude with those charming words of the evangelical prophet, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak you comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for her Redeemer, her all-gracious Redeemer, hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins," Isa. xl. 1, 2. May the God of our life and salvation make these Scriptures be unto us as a staff in the traveller's hand, and as a cordial to the fainting heart, that we may be strong in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ; that we may glorify him in death, and glorify him for death; because death will introduce us into his immediate presence, where we shall be sorrowful no more, sinful no more, at a distance no more; but be joyful, and be like our Lord; love him with all our souls, praise him to all eternity. Let us then be of good cheer, soon in our heavenly Jerusalem we shall meet again. Because God is faithful, inviolably faithful, and infinitely merciful, who hath promised,

promised to you, and promised to your affectionate friend, &c.

P. S.—My kindest respects to Mr ——, and Mrs ——; bid them be of good courage, and go on their way rejoicing, for their Redeemer is mighty, his merits are unspeakable, and his love is unchangeable. My most respectful compliments wait upon Mr —— and Mrs ——. What a pleasure should I think it, was I able to execute the ministerial office, to bring home to their parlours the glad tidings of an all-sufficient Saviour, as well as to preach them in the pulpit! Polly, I hope, loves her Bible; may the word of Christ dwell in her richly; and may he be with your father and mother, now they are old and grey-headed.

LETTER LXXXII.

DEAR ——, I HOPE this will find you a little better in your health; but if it should find you in a weak and languishing condition, I hope a gracious God will sanctify what it contains to the comfort of your soul.

Often consider, if you die, you will leave a world full of sin; a condition full of frailty, ignorance, and misery; a body that has long been a heavy burden, a sore clog, both to your services and to your comforts: and why should any one be greatly unwilling to leave such a state? If you die, you will go into an unknown world; but the comfort is, you have a kind and faithful friend gone thither before—Jesus Christ, your best friend, and the lover of your soul, is the Lord of that unseen world. Joseph's brethren were not afraid to go down into Egypt, when they knew that their dear brother was governor of the country. And since your most merciful Saviour is ruler of the invisible world, be not afraid to leave the body, and depart thither. It is said, the spirit of old Jacob revived when he saw the waggons sent to carry him to his beloved son; and the poor lan-

guishing believer may look upon death as the waggon sent by Jesus Christ to bring his soul home to heaven.

But after death comes judgment, and this is terrible. Consider, who is the Judge. Was the father that begat you, was the mother that bare you, or the friend that is as your own soul; was any one of these to be the Judge, and to pass the sentence, you would not be apprehensive of rigorous proceedings, you would expect all possible clemency. Mercy, in this case, would rejoice against judgment. But, to our unspeakable comfort, we are informed by the Scriptures, that a glorious Person, far more merciful than a father, far more compassionate than a mother, far more affectionate than a friend, is to decide our doom—even the Lord Jesus Christ, who loved us with an everlasting love; who declares, that a woman may forget her sucking child much sooner than he forget to be merciful to those that put their trust in him; for thus it is written, "God hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, even Jesus Christ," Acts xvii. 31.

The Judge calls himself our Husband, the Bridegroom of poor believing souls. And will the Bridegroom deliver to destruction his own bride, whom he has bought with his blood, and with whom he has made an everlasting covenant? Isa. liv. 5.

The Judge vouchsafes to be our Advocate. And will he condemn those for whom he has long interceded? will he condemn those for whom he poured out his prayers when he was on earth, and on whose behalf he has constantly pleaded in the presence of God? 1 John ii. 1.

The Judge condescends to be our Head, and calls the weakest believers his members. And did ever any one hate his own body? Did ever any one delight to maim, or take pleasure to ruin his own flesh, and his bones? Col. i. 18. 1 Cor. xii. 27.

The Judge has been our Victim, the sacrifice fo-

our sins. And will he consign those to damnation, for whom he endured the agonies of crucifixion? If he has given himself for us, will he not with this gift freely give us all things? give us pardon at that awful day? give us the crown of glory, which fadeth not away? Heb. ix. 14. 26.

Farther, to confirm your faith, and establish your hope, it will be proper to consider what you have to plead. The proud Pharisee made his abstaining from gross iniquities, and his punctuality in some external performances, his plea. The blinded Jews went about to establish their own righteousness, and depended on this broken reed for acceptance. But we have a surer foundation whereon to build our comfortable expectations.

If arraigned on the foot of guilt—great guilt—manifold guilt—aggravated guilt—long contracted guilt; we have an atonement to plead, a sacrifice of unknown value, a propitiation glorious and divine. We have the blood of the Lamb to plead; blood that taketh away not one sin, or a few sins, or a multitude of sins only; but (O delightful truth!) taketh away all, all, all sins. Yes, it taketh away all sins from the believer, be they ever so numerous; all sins, be they ever so heinous; 1 John i. 7. Rev. i. 5.

Should the law take us by the throat, and make that severe demand, Pay me that thou owest: It is paid, we reply, by our divine Surety. An incarnate God has been obedient in our stead. In the Lord, the Lord Redeemer, have we righteousness. And can the law insist on a more excellent satisfaction? Does not this magnify the law, and make it honourable? "By the obedience of one (that is, Christ) shall many be made righteous;" Isa. xlv. 24. Rom. v. 19.

Should it further be urged, Without holiness no man shall see the Lord: Is not holiness the thing that we have longed for? It is true, we have not attained to holiness, spotless and undefiled holiness; neither could we in the regions of temptation, and in

a body of corruption. But has not our guilt been our sorrow, and our indwelling sin our heaviest cross? Have we not groaned under our remaining iniquities, and been burdened with a sense of our failings? And are not these groanings the first fruits of the Spirit? Are not these the work of thy own grace, blessed Lord! and wilt thou not consummate in heaven what thou hast thus begun upon earth? Do we not desire heaven, chiefly because in those blessed mansions we shall sin no more; we shall offend our God no more; be no more forgetful of a dying Saviour; no more disobedient to the motions of a sanctifying Spirit? And shall we be disappointed of this hope? It cannot, it cannot be. They that hunger and thirst after righteousness, are not filled while they abide in the flesh; therefore there remaineth the accomplishment of this promise—they will assuredly awake up after the likeness of their Lord at the great resurrection day, and in another world be fully, everlastingly satisfied with it.

I must now come to a conclusion: But I cannot conclude without wishing you all joy and peace in believing. Though your flesh and your heart fail, may God be the strength of your heart, and your portion for ever! I daily, I frequently make mention of you in my prayers; and, what is better than all, the dearly beloved of the Father remembers you now he is in his kingdom. I am your very affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER LXXXIII.

[The following letter was sent to the preacher by a cottager in a country village; and is here printed, to shew how thankfully the poor receive the preaching of the gospel, and to preserve so remarkable and useful a letter from perishing.]

Reverend Sir,—I humbly beg your pardon for presuming to write to you. Being one of your hearers, I was very much affected with your good sermons, having known and experienced the

truth of them, viz. That persons must be convinced of their *undone* state by NATURE, and brought into a state of *concern*, or *self-condemnation*, before they will seek and *earnestly* desire the knowledge of Christ crucified. To one who feels the condemning power of the LAW, Christ is precious. Such have tasted the bitterness of sin; for till then they *are alive without the law*, as St Paul saith, Rom. vii. 9. not seeing that the LAW requires *perfect* obedience, and that THEIRS at the best is *very imperfect*. Hence the best of us in our carnal state are striving to be justified by our own *works*; yea, though we cannot but know that we often break the laws of God, Rom. iii. 20. 28.

But then we think, It is true I am a sinner, and there is none without sin. Thus we do presume upon our seeming obedience, not considering how great a CHANGE must be wrought upon our soul by repentance; and that we must be united to Christ by faith, and *partake of his likeness*, without which Christ, as to us, is dead in vain, Gal. ii. 21. And when the Holy Spirit has convinced us of our misery by sin, (John xvi. 8.) and need of Christ, then, usually, we are thinking TO DO something to *purchase* an interest in him; not considering we must be *humble supplicants* at his feet, waiting for *every thing* we want at the throne of grace—repentance, pardon, sanctification, redemption—as purchased by Him: Eternal life is the *gift* of God, Rom. vi. 23.

It is the *humbled* person who will accept of Christ in all his offices; not only as a priest to atone for sin, but also as a prophet to teach, and a king to rule over him, and subdue all his sins. The covenant of grace answers all our wants: there is not only *mercy* to *pardon*, but also *grace* to *sanctify*, and renew our nature. It is the *humbled* believer who can sincerely say, "Christ is the power of God unto salvation," Rom. i. 16.

And now I think nothing more needful than for clergymen to preach as *you* do; for though Chris-

tianity is generally professed among us, yet many seem as unconcerned about these things as if there were no such truths in the gospel. This is the way of preaching which has ever been most effectual to the converting of sinners; and may the blessed Spirit attend the word preached, "purifying the hearts of your hearers by faith," Acts xv. 9. That the righteousness of Christ, accepted and applied to themselves by a lively faith, may entitle them to heaven, Rom. v. 19.; and that their *sincere*, though *imperfect* obedience, may evidence their title to be true and real, is the hearty desire of, reverend sir, your most humble servant.

To *true believers* the LAW is set forth as a rule of *manners*, not as a law of *condemnation*, for there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, Rom. viii. 1. 6.; or, in other words, those who *love* Christ, *love* his commandments, as kind rules of life, not obeying (like legal people) with reluctance, and out of fear of being punished. There is not, perhaps, a greater or more important truth, than that in proportion as our faith in the Redeemer, evidenced by our works, increases, so our fear of death proportionably decreases.

LETTER LXXXIV.

DEAR ——, YOU need make no excuse for recommending Mr —— in his distressed condition. I am pleased to see you so tenderly concerned for a brother's welfare; and I am glad you have used the freedom of applying to me; seeing divine providence has put it in my power to help a disciple, a child, a member of Christ. I purposed to have given him ——, and to have lent him three; nor should I have been very rigorous in exacting the debt, provided there was but little ability to repay. But lest the fear of not being able to repay should create anxiety in an honest heart, and lessen the

comfort of a seasonable supply, I make him a present of the whole; heartily wishing that the same gracious God who inclined a stranger's heart to bestow it, may also prosper his endeavours to improve it. And if he often calls to remembrance that Almighty power and goodness which made a few drops of oil at the bottom of a cruse, and a little handful of meal that was the gleaning of the barrel, a lasting support to the prophet, and to the poor widow and her son, I doubt not but that he will be enabled to fix his dependence upon the same everlasting Father, for needful success in trading: so that, by God's blessing, I hope this little stock, frugally managed, may, through his kind Providence, put him in a way of procuring necessaries in this wilderness, till he comes to the fulness of the heavenly Canaan.

I think every instance of kindness shewn to us, or exercised by us, should enlarge our apprehensions of the divine benevolence. What is a grain of dust to the whole earth? what is a drop of water to the great ocean? or what are a few days to the countless ages of eternity? Less, unspeakably less is all created kindness, compared with the boundless goodness of God in Christ Jesus. For by him we have access to the Father, being reconciled by his blood shed on the cross. We are adopted and received into the church, whereof Christ is the head. Being thus in the favour of God, he delighteth in hearing the prayer of faith, which those who believe in Christ daily put up to the throne of grace. O how great is his loving-kindness and tender mercy! He is exalted, that he may have mercy upon all that call upon him in sincerity and truth. He waiteth to be gracious. He giveth liberally, and upbraideth not, for past ingratitude and great unworthiness. O how great are these blessings which he giveth! Blessings, in comparison of which silver is as clay, and gold as the mire of the streets. He giveth grace and glory, and no good thing will be withhold from them who live a godly life; from them who are accepted in the

beloved, and love him who first loved them. I shall add that charming declaration of the beloved disciple, and earnestly wish that we may learn by happy experience, and feel in our souls what it means, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us." Let me beg my dear friends to remember at the throne of grace your affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER LXXXV.

DEAR SISTER,—I HAVE taken my pen in my hand to write: but what shall be the subject? News I have none; or, if I had, my brother would communicate it in his conversation. Let me imitate a royal example. It was once said by a renowned king, *My song shall be of mercy and judgment*: of the same let my letter treat. The former was very lately the topic of some agreeable discourse with a young gentleman. We observed how necessary it is to be firmly persuaded of the infinitely rich mercies of God in Christ Jesus. This will make us delight to think of him, and encourage us to fly to him: Whereas, if we have a jealousy that he bears us ill-will, or designs our ruin, we cannot take pleasure in him, or place our confidence in him. Therefore the condescending God has given us repeated and solemn assurances of his pity, his grace, his tender mercy in Christ Jesus.

Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. He makes it his very name. Intimating, that a man may forget his own name, before the blessed God can cease to be merciful to them that fear him.

Ezek. xxxiii. 7. 11. He confirms his divine goodwill to us by an oath. He swears by his very life, that he desires our happiness, and seeks our salvation. Here are two immutable things, the name and the oath of God. Can we have stronger confirmation of his loving-kindness?

I think, if it be possible, we have. *He has so loved us*, saith the Scripture. How hath he loved us? So

as no words, no, not of his own all-wise Spirit, can express; nothing but the unspeakably precious effects; so as to surrender his own Son to die, that we might live; to be made subject to the law, that we by his obedience might be made righteous; to become a curse, that we might inherit the blessing. Read what the wife of Manoah very justly alleges, and apply it to the point before us, (Judges xiii. 23.) for I can no more; I hear the coach coming to carry me out on a visit.—Yours, &c.

LETTER LXXXVI.

My dear Friend,—I am glad to find that the beloved traveller called at your house, and gave you so much of his company. Cold as the weather was, did not your heart burn within you? burn with zeal and love for that all-glorious God, whom he (excellent man) so faithfully serves in the gospel of his Son?

May Mrs —— increase in humility, be more convinced of guilt, more sensible of depravity; and then she will grow in every other grace. Proud minds suffer the curse imprecated on the mountains of Gilboa; while humble souls are like the valleys spread forth by the rivers, or as a field which the Lord hath blessed.

I think you should not have shewn her the free remark which I made; it was well-meant, and she is well-disposed, but human nature is very, very depraved. And perhaps there is no greater instance of it, than our proneness to take offence at the least disparaging hint; nay, sometimes to fancy ourselves wronged, if we are not extolled to the skies. I heartily wish the blessed Jesus may give this young lady the ornament of a meek and humble spirit; that being lowly in her own eyes, she may be exalted by the great God.

I see so much indigence, and so many distressed objects, that I begrudge myself all unnecessary disbursements of money. Who would indulge too

much, even in innocent and elegant amusements, and thereby lessen his ability to relieve, to cherish, and comfort the Lord Jesus, in his afflicted members?

I wish you could have preached at Collingtree. My poor people long for the sincere milk of the word. You would have a congregation, all of them honouring you, most of them attentive to you, and many of them edified by you. It grieves me, it pains me at my very soul, that I am dismissed, or rather cut off from the honourable and delightful service of the ministry. But to be resigned, perhaps, is better than to labour; and an adoring submission, for me at least, more proper than a zealous application. O may I bow my head, and dutifully stand in the lot which the almighty Sovereign pleases to assign!—Ever yours, &c.

LETTER LXXXVII.

London, Saturday night.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I CONGRATULATE you on ——'s recovery. Why do you call her ——? It is a strong temptation to vanity. She must be deeply ballasted with humility, not to be puffed up at such a title, which assimilates her to one of the most lovely and accomplished characters that ever was described.

O that we all may be recovered from that lethargic indolence which deadens our attention to the one thing needful! What a God have we! how immeasurely glorious, and how little do we reverence him!—What a Saviour! how unutterably gracious! and how little do we love him!—What promises! how inviolably faithful! yet how feeble is our affiance in them!—What a heaven! how transcendently delightful! yet how languid are our desires of it! O that the blessed, blessed Redeemer may baptize us with the Holy Ghost, as with a flaming fire, to quicken, animate, and kindle into a glow of devotion, these benumbed souls of ours! I must add no more, only

that I am, with great sincerity, though in great haste, inviolably yours, &c.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

My dear Friend,—I am surprised at what you say relating to dear ——. What evil hath he done, or wherein has he offended, that disesteem should be his lot? Yet what are such instances of contempt, compared with the reproaches and insults offered to the all-glorious Redeemer? God, I trust, will bless his sermon; and so much the more as it is regarded by some people with an evil eye. O what a comfortable consideration is it, that the success of our discourses depends not upon our own ability, which is as nothing; depends not upon the favour of men, which is very capricious; but depends wholly upon the influence of that almighty Spirit, whose presence is unlimited, and power uncontrollable!

My father had engaged Mr ——— to supply at Collingtree: I hope he grows in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Adieu, my dear friend, adieu.

LETTER LXXXIX.

London, Feb. 23.

Sir,—Mr —— and Mr ——— may have tried, and may repeat their attempts, to alienate the affections of my Collingtree hearers. I am under no concern with regard to myself. *Fragile cupiens illidere dentem, offendet solido*, will, I believe, be the issue of their endeavours. I am only sorry, for the people's sake, that they should squander away their ministerial talents and ministerial labours to so poor a purpose. Let them be more incessant in warning every man, and teaching every man, that they may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Thus let them seek to win their affections, and I do

rejoice, yea, and will rejoice, in their success. Dear sir, the way to secure the love of others is, to love them, to pray for them, and with a willing assiduity to set forward their true happiness. This, whenever I was amongst them, my people will confess, I did not cease to do. And the God of heaven knows I daily bear them on my heart, and often recommend them to the tenderest mercies of our everlasting Father. Never, therefore, be apprehensive of my losing either their esteem with regard to my conduct, or their affection with regard to my person. O that their precious souls were as firmly united to Christ, as their favourable opinion is secured to me! Well, should neighbours undermine us, and friends forsake us, the adorable and all-condescending God is faithful. He changeth not. His word of grace endureth for ever. He loves his people with an everlasting love. And O what worms, what dust, what mere nothings, are all men, are all creatures, before that infinitely blessed Author of all perfection! What a sense had the Psalmist of this weighty truth, when he poured forth that rapturous exclamation, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none, there is nothing on earth, that I desire in comparison of thee!" May this, my dear friend, be the continual language of your heart; and of his, who hopes to be, both in time and to eternity, affectionately yours, &c.

LETTER XC.

Wednesday morning, Mile's-lane.

DEAR MR NIXON,—YOUR obliging letter found me at my brother's in Mile's-lane, where I propose to abide to the end of the week: and here your entertaining and improving company would be a favour, not to myself only, but to the whole family.

I am indebted to your good-nature for so candidly accepting the small but free observation made in my last. I am going to run myself farther in debt, by

proposing to your consideration what now occurs to my thoughts. The enclosed queries I submit entirely to your judgment, and from your determination shall make no appeal.

I have read Elihu; and very much admire his zeal for that most comfortable doctrine, the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ imputed to sinners for their justification. I highly honour also his distinguished veneration for that incomparably excellent book the Bible. Surely his works will be a means of causing the study of those λογια ζωντα to revive. Do not you think the style is masculine, and the manner enlivened? As to the Hutchinsonian peculiarities, I do not pretend to be a competent judge, and dare not peremptorily condemn them. Yet they seem to be so very finely spun, and to have so large an alloy of fancy, that I know not how to admit them for sterling truth. I am truly concerned to hear of Mr ——'s and his lady's illness. Dear sir, what a fading flower is health, and what an expiring vapour is life! May you be an instrument of bringing souls to the knowledge of the adorable God, and to the faith of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent; then they will, in another state of things, possess a vigour that is subject to no decay, and enjoy that life that knows no end. I am, dear sir, your obliged and affectionate friend, &c.

P. S.—Is "lively oracles" an exact translation of the above-mentioned Greek clause?

LETTER XCI.

London, March 28. 1751.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—YOU depend, you say, upon my promise: and see how readily it is performed. And if you depend on the execution of a promise from a frail, frail creature; will you not much more expect accomplishment of promises, made by that adorable Being "whose counsels of old are faithfulness and truth?" O, that we may not dishonour

God's goodness, disparage his veracity, and depreciate his dear Son's unspeakable merits, by unbelief, base, vile, destructive unbelief!

I have not an opportunity of communicating your news to our dear friend. He has left London. It is not known when he will return. He is not expected till some months are expired; and who knows how many may be gone into eternity before that period is arrived!

You ask how it fares with my health? You may remember, that I have more than once answered such an inquiry with silence; for I do not like to be upon the complaining string, and I cannot say my health is either restored or improved. When your letter came (not till Tuesday about five o'clock) it found me in a state of extreme languor. I had written nothing, done nothing since dinner. Though I took up an easy and entertaining book, I was obliged to lay it down again. Thus I spend, rather thus I lose, many hours: so that between intervening company, and debility of spirits, I make but a very slow, scarce any progress in my intended work.

I have no news, though at the great mart of intelligence. My sister is safely delivered of a son; which puts one in mind of the glorious piece of news, celebrated by the angels, and foretold with a rapturous delight by the prophet, "To us a Child is born; to us a Son is given. His name shall be the Mighty God;" and yet his office shall be, to bear our sins in his own body on the tree. May this news be ever sounding in the ears, and ever operative on the hearts of my dear friend, and of his ever affectionate, &c.

LETTER XCII.

Tottenham, May 30. 1751.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I AM now at my brother's country house. Pray who is Mr ——, the writer of the letter enclosed in yours? He asks me to get him a curacy; little aware that I am but a curate myself.

I believe the world has a notion, that I am a dignified, or a beneficed man at least. Dear sir, may it be your benefice and mine to do good to souls! and our highest dignity to glorify the ever-blessed Redeemer! who for our sake had not where to lay his head, till he was numbered with the transgressors, and laid in the silent grave.

I hope your health is established; and how does your soul prosper? Do not you delight to think of, to talk of, to have communion with, that wonderful, that amiable Being, whom to know is wisdom, whom to enjoy is happiness; happiness, not to be described by words, only to be understood by experience? Oh that we may follow on to know him! Then we have a promise; a promise more stable than the foundations of nature, that our "labour shall not be in vain in the Lord." Gold has no value, and diamonds lose their lustre, when compared with those unsearchable riches of Christ, which Mr —— so largely enjoys himself, and so freely offers to others. His ministry is signally owned by his condescending and almighty Master. Many, I am told, of the superior, as well as lower orders in life, attend his ministry. And if there be efficacy in united prayers; if there be zeal in the Lord God of Hosts, for the honour of his dear Son; if there be faithfulness and compassion in our exalted Saviour, his labours will, they will be blessed. May they, every day, every hour, be blessed more abundantly! Most cordially yours, &c.

LETTER XCIII.

Tottenham, July 2. 1751.

My dear Friend,—I hope you have done with Mr ——: I hope your house is sufficiently ornamented. I think it is rather overstocked with decorations. Now let us be good stewards of Jesus Christ; employ what we can spare for the honour of his blessed name, and comfort of his indigent people. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive riches as well as blessings and praise."

Pray do not mention me to Mrs ——. Though I honour and compassionate her, I am not fit to visit her, nor qualified to edify her. This is with me the trying season of the year, and my animal nature is all relaxation. O that I may be strong in faith! that precious faith, that "where sin hath abounded, grace will much more abound."

Do not you sometimes see our dear friend ——? I find he has been at Bristol lately, to distribute, I do not doubt, the waters of life, far more precious and healing than the waters of that medicinal spring. Let us do likewise. "For yet a very, very little while (μικρον οσον οσον) and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry." Then opportunities of spiritual and bodily charity cease for ever.

I believe it is four months since I heard from Mr ——. How precarious human interchanges of kindness! what a blessing that the way to heaven is always open! Whenever we will, we may have access to God through the blood of his Son. And "he never faileth them that seek him."

How does Mr —— go on? Do not you sometimes stir up the embers in his heart, if so be the coals may glow, and the fire at length burn? I hope your conversation is blessed to Mrs ——. Glad to find she admits Mrs —— to her company; a godly sensible woman, who understands, relishes, talks savourily and intelligently on the truths of the gospel: Is discreet likewise; knows how to keep a becoming distance, and will not make a wrong, an assuming use of a lady's condescension. May the God of heaven bless them both, and give them to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And what I pray for them, I pray for my dear friend. Ever yours, &c.

LETTER XCIV.

Tottenham, July 14. 1751.

My dear Friend,—I am sorry to hear your account of Mr ——. See what snares are around us.

How the devil endeavours to obstruct our usefulness, by blemishing our credit. May the ministers of Christ be upright and undefiled in the way! or else they will not be able to reprove and exhort with all (no, nor with any) authority. The God of power and faithfulness says of his church, says of his people, "I the Lord keep it, I will water it every moment, lest any hurt it: I will preserve it night and day," Isa. xxvii. 3. May this promise be our shield! be fulfilled to us evermore! Do not you go on, my dear friend, to lay up these precious pledges of heaven in your memory, and enrich your heart from them by frequent meditation? They are the seed of faith. By these we are to be "made partakers of the divine nature!" Partakers of the divine nature! volumes cannot explain what is comprised in those few words. May we know what they mean, by happy, happy experience!

I pity poor Mr ——, knowing what it is to be in a state of languishing. Ah! ah! my dear sir, lay up a stock of comfort, get your graces lively, while animal nature blooms. When the blast of sickness smites, and our strength becomes labour and sorrow, how miserable must be our condition without an interest, an established interest, in the all-glorious Redeemer!

Why do you cherish distrustful thoughts of the blessed God? Is he not boundless goodness? Is not his goodness greater than the heavens? Does not his mercy, that lovely attribute, endure for ever? All the kindness of the most endeared relations, compared with the tender compassions of a God in Christ, are no better than cruelty itself. Read the last chapter of Hosea. "Hide it within your heart." Turn it into prayer to the King of heaven; and I hope it will be to your soul as the dawning-day after a darksome night.

Our dear friend has met with uncommon favour and acceptance. Excellent man! How does he work while it is day! How sweet to such a labourer will

be heaven's everlasting rest! There may you meet him! and there find, as a monument of infinitely free grace in Christ, your truly affectionate, &c.

LETTER XCV.

Oct. 18. 1751.

My dear Friend,—Two of your letters are now before me, who expected long ere this to have been before the Judge of quick and dead. Blessed be God I am got down stairs, and the day before yesterday went abroad in a coach. Oh! what great troubles and adversities hast thou shewed me! yet didst thou turn and refresh me; yea, and broughtest me from the depths of the earth again. Oh! my dear friend, how shall I be thankful? May that infinitely good and gracious God, who has given me such cause, give me power to be grateful. May I be enabled to devote every moment of that life which he has prolonged, and every faculty of that body which he hath preserved; devote them wholly to the honour of his blessed name.

Poor ——'s case I commiserate. The charge attending my illness will be considerable; but I am not without hopes that my father will be so good as to defray it, then my hands will not be straitened: O that my bowels may never be straitened, but may I "draw out my soul to the hungry."

I am glad to hear that a seventh edition of Dr Stonehouse's book is demanded. May it go forth in the name, in the strength, and for the honour of the blessed Jesus, and may it prosper! though, as you observe, he and I think differently on some points; nor is the doctor an admirer of my favourite author Mr Marshall. The acceptance, however, which God has given to his and to my own writings, should send both of us oftener to the throne of grace, and quicken our applications to the divine Goodness, that his all-powerful Spirit may accompany our instructions, and make them a real blessing to our readers.

I write as a poor prisoner that lately expected to have the sentence of death executed, but has now got a short, uncertain reprieve. May I never forget how much I shall want an assured faith in the all-glorious Redeemer, when that awful change approaches. Let us labour after such a firm establishment in Christ, such an unshaken affiance in his merits, and such an unfeigned love of his name, as may make it gain to die, and the day of our dissolution better than the day of our nativity. Poor Dr ——! Oh! may he and his afflicted partner find consolation in the faithfulness, the goodness, the unsearchable riches of Christ! These, apprehended by a sweet, assured, soul-reviving faith; these, I say, are our sovereign support under all troubles, and our most effectual preservative from all temptations. We believe; blessed, blessed Jesus, help our unbelief! I am, my dear sir, ever yours, &c.

LETTER XCVI.

London, Mile's-lane, Dec. 3. 1751.

Dear Mr Nixon,—It is probable you may have heard of my late dangerous sickness; and it is more than probable, nay, I look upon it as a certainty, that your good-nature has admitted this circumstance as an excuse for my silence. Indeed, dear sir, I was sick, and nigh unto death. Little did I think of writing any more to my friends, or of being written any longer among the living. Oh that I may devote the life that has been prolonged, devote it wholly to the God of my health and my salvation!

I received by Dr —— your quotation from Plato, proving that the preposition ἀντὶ bears a vicarious signification. For which be pleased to accept my thanks. It is a most reviving and delightful truth, that Christ has suffered in our stead, and bore all our sins in his own body on the tree. When I was lately upon the verge of eternity, and just going to launch into the invisible world, I could find consola-

tion in nothing but this precious, precious faith. If all my iniquities were laid upon the beloved Son, they will never be laid to my charge in the day of judgment. If the blessed Jesus made full satisfaction for my transgressions, the righteous God will never demand two payments of one debt. What an anchor for the soul is such a belief! how sure, how steadfast! May it be our solace in life, and our security in death!

A volume of letters, written by the Earl of Orrery to his son, has very much captivated the attention of the public. Dr Brown's Remarks too upon Lord Shaftesbury's Characteristics are, I think, equally worthy of universal acceptance. It is a refined entertainment to peruse such elegant and judicious compositions; but how flat are they all, how jejune and spiritless, compared with the sincere milk of the word, the lively oracles of God! I hope they will always prove a whet to our spiritual appetite; quicken our desires, and heighten our relish of that heavenly manna which is spread over every page of the Bible. I am, dear sir, your very affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER XCVII.

London, Jan. 14. 1752.

My dear Friend,—I know you will excuse my long silence, and acquit me on the receipt of this letter, though I own myself in your debt for another. When I have a lucid or a lively interval, I think it my duty to employ it in attempting to finish my little work; which, alas! proceeds as slowly as my blood creeps heavily through my veins. Happy, happy they, who have firmness of nerve, and fertility of thought, and are enabled to devote them both to their gracious Redeemer's service.

Please to pay my best thanks to Dr Cotton for his very delicate Visions. I wish they may do good, and promote virtue; then, I am persuaded, they will answer the benevolent intention of the author. I wish

at the same time, that he would be a little explicit and courageous for Jesus Christ. He deserves it at our hands, who for our sake endured the cross, and despised the shame: he will recompense it into our bosom by owning us before his Father and the holy angels. Nor can I ever think that the spread of our performances will be obstructed by pleasing him who has all hearts and all events in his sovereign hand. A vision upon death, without a display of Christ, seems to me like a body without a heart, or a heart without animal spirits. I am sure, when I was lately (as myself and every one apprehended) on the brink of eternity, I found no consolation but in Christ. Then I felt, what I had so often read, that there is no other name given under heaven whereby man may obtain life and salvation, but only the name, the precious and inestimable name of Jesus Christ. Oh! that its savour may be to us, both living and dying, "as ointment poured out."

Tell Mrs ——, that she has not offended me; but I am grieved that I should give her occasion for such a suspicion.

You refer me to 2 Esdras v. 33. "And I said, Speak on, my Lord; then said he unto me, Thou art sore troubled in mind for Israel's sake: lovest thou that people better than he that made them?" It is a sweet passage, a noble and comfortable truth; and the apparent doctrine of Scripture, however found in an apocryphal book. Oh! that we may seek more assiduously to our all-condescending and omnipotent Friend. He will never upbraid us for our importunity; he will never disappoint our hope; he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think; and, blessed for ever be his name, as is his power so is his love to his people, his children, his heirs. In this blessed number may he rank my dear friend, and his ever affectionate, &c.

LETTER XCVIII.

Mile's-lane, March 24. 1752.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I RECEIVED your favour. I congratulate you on your success in your profession. Moses says, "It is God who giveth power to get wealth." May such accessions of prosperity enlarge your heart with gratitude, and attach your affections to our divine Benefactor! I am sorry to hear your account of dear ——. O that we may be taught φερων εις το σωφερων. "Lord lead me in a plain way," was the prayer of a noble sufferer. May the thing that he prayed for be the desire of our heart, and guide of our life.—I will very readily give him some Bibles; if he (for he is, if I mistake not, a member of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge) will send me an order in his name, a dozen shall be at his service. I shall think my own books are published to good purpose, if they enable the author to distribute the invaluable book of God.

Upon reflection, I charge myself with folly for putting it into Mr ——'s power to communicate a certain rumour. The wise man says, humorously and sarcastically, "Venture to conceal a secret, and behold it will not burst thee." Intimating withal, that a secret in most people's breast is like fermenting liquor in a cask, which must have vent, or else it will burst the vessel. Therefore,

Quid de quoque viro, et cui dicas, sæpe caveto.

Mr ——'s last piece I have not read through. I cannot say I am fond of that controversy. The doctrine of the perseverance of Christ's servants, Christ's children, Christ's spouse, and Christ's members, I am thoroughly persuaded of. Predestination and reprobation I think of with fear and trembling. And if I should attempt to study them, I would study them on my knees.

I wish you would ask Dr S——'s opinion about Eph. iv. 16. with relation to the anatomical propriety

of the passage; and, with his, give me your own. I know not what to do about publishing. May the Father of lights direct me! and not suffer me, either to write improperly, or to print precipitately! With thanks for your letter, and with prayers for your increase in faith, in love, and holiness; or in that "kingdom of God, which is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," I am ever yours, &c.

LETTER XCIX.

Mile's-lane, 1752.

DEAR MR NIXON,—I AM obliged to you for the favour done me by your letter, and for the honour done me by your verses to be engraved under my mezzotinto picture. I should have acknowledged both these obligations sooner, if my printseller had not been dilatory in publishing the picture; which is now transmitted to Dr Stonehouse, and desires your acceptance.

I cannot forbear thinking that what is called honour is a little capricious and whimsical. I, for my part, had taken my final leave of her; expected none of her favours, and was become familiarly acquainted with contempt. How is it then that she singles out a person whose name has long ago been struck out of her list; and bestows her caresses upon a mean creature, that has been used to sit on the dunghill? Oh that it may be for the glory of Christ's grace, Christ's wisdom, Christ's power! May I serve to the Sun of Righteousness as a cloud is subservient to the sun in the firmament, which, though all-gloomy in itself, exhibits a rainbow; and thereby shews the world what beautiful colours are combined in that magnificent luminary.

You are pleased to inquire after my little work; dear sir, add to your kind inquiries a prayer to God, that it may be executed under the anointings of his Spirit, and appear (if ever it appears) under the influence of his blessing. My late sickness laid an ab-

solute embargo upon it for a considerable time; and has so shattered my feeble constitution, that I proceed like a vessel that has lost its rigging, and is full of leaks. However slowly I advance in this essay, may I grow daily in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and meet you, dear sir, in that happy, happy haven, where we both would be. Till then be pleased to rank in the number of your sincere and affectionate friends, your obliged humble servant, &c.

LETTER C.—To his Mother.

April 6.

'Honoured Madam,—I received your favour of the 4th instant. Am very sorry to find my father is so ill. Hope and earnestly pray that the great eternal Lord of life and death will rebuke his disorder, and restore him to health. You need not doubt of being remembered in my supplications to the throne of grace: O that they were better! O that they proceeded from firmer faith, and were accompanied with greater fervour! Poor and weak as they are, they are often put up in behalf of my honoured parents, that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ may strengthen them with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness; may give them an humble resignation to his blessed will; enable them to rejoice even in their tribulations, and make all things work together for their good, their exceeding great and everlasting good.

I have, in obedience to your orders, put my affairs in readiness to leave the city; but hope there will be no occasion for such a speedy removal. But if I should come, alas! what can I do? My weakness is inconceivable. None can know it but the all-searching God. I am evidently worse, now the milder weather is advancing.

I am glad to hear my sister holds well. God al-

ways mingles our cup of affliction with some sweetening drops. None but Christ, that dear and adored Redeemer, none but Christ had gall without any honey, and vengeance without any mercy. Blessed be his most holy name for enduring all kind of misery, that we might want no manner of thing that is good. I am, &c.

LETTER CI.

Tottenham, Oct. 18. 1751.

DEAR SIR,—WHAT shall I say, or how shall I excuse myself? I seem to be in the condition of Pharaoh's butler, who remembered not his good friend Joseph, but forgat him. Yet be assured, dear sir, that I have not forgot your kindness; I have retained a warm sense of gratitude in my breast. The reason of my not acknowledging your favour sooner, was this,—I proposed to have transmitted my piece to your hands, (that part of it at least which was to be enriched with your own thoughts), that it might have the advantage of your critical revisal, and judicious corrections.

But extreme weakness of body has retarded me in accomplishing, has almost rendered me incapable of prosecuting the work; to all which infirmities, the providence of our all-wise heavenly Father has been pleased to superadd a violent fever, which confined me for eight weeks, and brought me to the very brink of the grave. I beg of you, dear sir, to accept my best thanks for your letter, and its valuable contents; though late in their arrival, they are very sincere in their tender. I hope you will give me leave to be obliged to you for one favour more. If ever the Divine goodness shall enable me to complete my design, allow me to put it under your examination; I shall send it abroad into the world with much less trepidation, with much greater satisfaction, if it has undergone the scrutiny of your judgment, and received the correction of your pen. I am, at least I wish to be, sensible of my own incapacity for

handling the glorious, the divinely excellent truths of God's everlasting gospel. If the apostle, who had been caught up into the third heaven, could not forbear crying out with so much vehemence, "Who is sufficient for these things?" what, O what shall I say! Indeed, I have much fear and trembling of heart, lest I should give some wrong touch to the ark; or by any imprudent, though officious kiss, betray my divine Master to his enemies, rather than recommend him to the world. Good sir, assist me with your prayers, that if I write, I may be anointed with that unction from the Holy One, which may teach me all things, and lead me into all truth, which may furnish me with the tongue of the learned, and give me the pen of a ready writer.

Have you seen Mr Taylor's late Treatise on the Sacrifice and Atonement of Jesus Christ? If you have, I should be glad to know what remarks occurred to your mind on the perusal. As you are a lover of natural philosophy, I wish you would consider the blessing of Joseph, Deut. xxxiii. 13—16. and favour me with your sentiments upon that beautiful passage. I should not make either this or the preceding request, if I had not the highest opinion of the freedom and fidelity of your temper, and the accurate discernment of your understanding. As the blessed God has been pleased to deaden your sense of hearing, may he daily quicken your spiritual senses to discern both good and evil. May he give you to hear the sweet and still voice of his good Spirit witnessing with your spirit, that you are the child of God and an heir of glory! And would you implore the same blessing for your unworthy friend, it would be a kindness most gratefully to be acknowledged by, dear sir, your much obliged and affectionate servant, &c.

P. S.—We have put one of Mr Moses Browne's children apprentice to a handsome business; and it will be a pleasure to do so worthy a man all the service that lies in my power.

LETTER CII.

London, Mile's-lane, Dec. 22. 1751.

DEAR SISTER,—YESTERDAY, in the afternoon, Mr —— and his mother called upon me: he offered to convey a letter, or any message, to Weston. I could not neglect this opportunity of sending you my best wishes, and the congratulations of the season.

Please to thank my mother for her kind letter. The wine was to have come last week, but my brother forgot to give the necessary orders, until it was too late. I hope no such disappointment will happen, if we live to see the end of this week. I wish you much of the divine presence, and joy of the Lord in using it. May we all drink of those living waters which Christ Jesus has promised in his gospel, of which they who drink shall thirst no more; but they shall be in them a well of water springing up into everlasting life. Pray let me know, what those living waters mean?

I have no present to make you this Christmas, unless you will accept one from God's holy word. In the 9th chapter of Isaiah it is foretold, that poor sinners shall not only have a good hope, but shall even rejoice before God; rejoice with exceeding great joy; such as the husbandman feels, when he gathers in his harvest, and receives the reward of all his toil; such as the soldier experiences, when he has conquered his enemy, and is dividing the spoil.

What shall be the source of this joy? their worldly wealth? Alas, riches make themselves wings, and fly away. They profit not in the day of wrath.—Their carnal pleasures? These are always froth, and frequently gall. To be enamoured with these, is death.—Their own good deeds? These are a broken reed, a filthy rag; and should cover us with confusion, not fill us with conceit. Whence then is this joy to flow? From Christ, wholly from Christ: he is the rich gift of God, he is the pearl of great price;

the only consolation of sinners, and the supreme joy of his people. Therefore the prophet adds, in the language of triumph and exultation, "To us a Child is born; to us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." This Child is Jesus Christ, who is the foundation of all our comfort, the spring of all true delight. He is the Son of the Most High, yet given to be made man, to be made a sacrifice, to be made a curse, for us. So great, that the government of universal nature is upon his shoulder. The sceptre of supreme authority is in his hand: he is "Head over all things to his church." So glorious, that his name shall be called Wonderful. God and man in one matchless and marvellous person, clothed with clay, yet possessed of all the fulness of the Godhead: like Jacob's ladder; whose foot was fixed on earth, while the summit was lost in the skies. So gracious, that he is the Counsellor, to instruct ignorant creatures, and by his word and Spirit make them wise unto salvation. "The Mighty God;" to subdue our iniquities, to write his laws in our hearts, and make us partakers of a divine nature. "The Prince of Peace;" reconciling us to God by his death, and making peace by the blood of his cross; by applying these blessings to our consciences, filling us with that peace of God which passeth all understanding. "The Everlasting Father;" to cherish us under the wings of his providence and grace, to make all things work together for our good, and prepare for us an everlasting inheritance; even the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. O may the adorable Redeemer be all this to us! The prophet repeats this expression, *To us.* This circumstance is of the last importance. Then only is Christ our Fountain of life, and full of delights, when he is all this, does all this, to us, even to us.

Let this Scripture be the subject of our medit-

amidst the approaching solemnity. And may an everlasting sense of its blessings give an additional, a heavenly relish to all our other entertainment! I am your affectionate brother, &c.

LETTER CIII.

DEAR SIR,—IT is not the difficulty of answering Dr ——'s question that makes me avoid it, but the disagreeable nature of the office; as it will oblige me to shew that he entirely mistakes both the nature of the Scriptures, and the nature of man. He would make Dr ——'s and Dr ——'s sentiments of things, the touchstone of divine revelation. What is level to their apprehensions, must be right; what comports with their notions, must be true. At this rate, they are not doers of the law, but judges. On the contrary, if they do not understand the doctrine of union with Christ, or the fitness of free justification to promote holiness, it is because their understandings are darkened; it is a sign, that they want the eye-salve; a proof, that their senses are not exercised to discern between good and evil.

Dr —— has Roman virtue; but indeed he very much wants the eye-salve. He sees no glory and comeliness in Christ, but much in his own conformity to the commands of his Maker. While such sentiments possess the mind, people have no eyes to discern the beauty of free grace. Christ is just as insignificant, as the physician's offering to prescribe for a person in perfect health. I am sure, my poor, lame, mangled conformity to my Maker's commands, fills me with shame, and would make me hang down my head as a bulrush. But my Lord's death, my Lord's obedience, my divine Lord's merit, encourages me, imboldens me, and enables me to say, Who shall condemn me? Be pleased, by the bye, to compare Dr ——'s foundation for comfort and confidence with St Paul's, Rom. viii. 33, 34. Who is in the right I leave you to determine. I will only

venture to assert, that Paul of Tarsus had as much conformity to the commands of his Maker as our amiable friend. Oh that he was less amiable in his own eyes; and knew himself to be "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." See Rev. iii. 17.

1*st*, "A persuasion of our reconciliation to God, previous to our performance of holy duties." Dr —— asks, what is the foundation of such a persuasion? To which I answer, the doctrine delivered by St Paul, Rom. v. 10. "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." From this passage he will see, that reconciliation to God is previous to our performance of holy duties. It is a blessing procured for enemies; and to say, that enemies have performed holy duties, is to confound the difference between rebels and subjects; is to make rebellion and allegiance the same. Nay, more, this blessing has no manner of dependence on our performance of holy duties, because it is procured, not partially, but wholly procured by the death of Christ. It is not said, when we, who were some time enemies, began to perform holy duties; but when we were enemies, while we were enemies, and considered only as enemies. Then, even then. —Wondrous grace! grace worthy of a God! Will not such grace incline the rebels to throw down their arms?

The Doctor, having laid down some premises, makes this inference: "Hence the phrase of our reconciliation to God, when we have renounced our sins." But does this inference tally with the apostle's declaration, or is it the proper consequence of his doctrine? Let not the acute disputant, but the wayfaring man, judge.

"Our blessed Saviour," adds the Doctor, "directly asserts, that the performance of religious duties is the sole evidence of reconciliation." We are not inquiring about the evidences of reconciliation, but about the way to acquire them. To determine what

are the evidences of a cure, is easy enough; but to prescribe the expeditious and certain method of working the cure, this is the thing we want. Here, according to my poor opinion, Mr Marshall excels as much in the spiritual, as Dr —— in the animal *Therapeutica.*

The Doctor urges our Lord's words, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." Wandering from the point again. The question is, How we shall be animated, strengthened, and enabled to do them?

Upon this subject reason tells us, that such a discharge of religious duties can alone convince a Christian of the sincerity of his profession. It may be so: but pray, Madam Reason, do not be impertinent, we did not ask your opinion upon the point; if you would speak to the purpose, you must tell us, how we may be enabled to discharge these religious duties. Does your ladyship know, which is the first religious duty. I question it; be content therefore to receive information from Scripture: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." This is the first religious duty: now tell Dr —— and me, tell us honestly and explicitly, how we can perform this duty? Is it possible to love the Lord, to love him with all our heart, if we look upon him as incensed against us, unreconciled to us? Is it possible to love him, when we apprehend ourselves to be under his wrath, or suspect that he will prove an enemy to us at the last?

The Doctor having a higher opinion of reason* than I, is a greater favourite with her; I would therefore beg to know of him, what reply she makes to this interrogatory; and I promise beforehand, that I will stand to her award, if she can point out any method of practising this duty, different from that proposed by Mr Marshall; then my favourite author and myself will submit to the charge of enthusiasm.

2dly, "A persuasion of our future enjoyment of

* Reason, I mean, in her present fallen state.

the heavenly happiness, previous to our performance of holy duties."

I ask Mr Hervey, "What is the foundation of such a persuasion?" Mr Hervey answers, Our free justification through Jesus Christ, which we receive under the character of ungodly persons; consequently before the performance of good works, Rom. iv. 5. I answer again, The free promise of God: "God hath given unto us eternal life," 1 John v. 11. But is not this promise founded on our own duties and obedience? No; but on the duties and obedience of our great Mediator. "This life is in his Son."

In the first book of the sacred writings is this important interrogatory, made by God himself, "If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted?" Here I beg leave to ask, in my turn, Which is the person who does well? Dr ——, who would persuade us to reject the gift of God, 1 John v. 11. and not believe his word? or Mr Marshall, who would engage us to credit the divine declaration, and receive the divine gift? The apostle says, by not believing this record, "we make God a liar," 1 John v. 10. And shall we call this doing well? or is this the way to be accepted?

The Doctor farther urges, In the very last chapter of the same sacred volumes we are told, "Blessed are they who do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life." Let me ask again, Does the Doctor remember what the commandments of the Almighty are? He may see them reduced to two particulars, and ranged in the exactest order, 1 John iii. 23. The first of these commandments is, "That we believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." Let the Doctor only interpret this precept, tell me what is included in this injunction, and I am inclined to think, he will find each of Mr Marshall's preliminary articles contained in its import. To believe in Christ, is to live under a persuasion that he has died to reconcile me to God; that he has obeyed to obtain eternal life for me; and intercedes in heaven the

I may receive the Holy Ghost the Comforter. Take away these ingredients from faith, and its spirit evaporates; its very life expires; you have nothing left but a mere *caput mortuum.*

The Doctor charges us "with spiritual pride." But is it pride to confess ourselves ungodly wretches, and, as such, to receive free justification from infinitely rich grace? "With presumption and unwarrantable persuasions." But is that a presumptuous claim, or that an unwarrantable persuasion, which is founded on the infallible promise of God, and implied in the very nature of faith? He bids us beware, lest we be the dupes of our own credulity. We thank him for the friendly admonition; and, to shew our gratitude, we would suggest a caution to our worthy friend, that before he argues on a religious subject, he would gain clearer ideas of its nature. He talks of reconciliation, as implying concern and grief. Here he fights with a shadow, and a shadow of his own raising; no mortal ever affirmed or dreamed of any such thing. Reconciliation is neither more or less than a removal of offence, and a restoration to favour. He mentions Mr Marshall's three propositions as the requisite signals of faith; whereas they are the constituent parts, the very essence of faith: they differ as much from a signal, as the florid blood and lively spirits differ from the bloom on the cheek, or the sparkle in the eye. He tells us, "That the faith of the Jews was one thing; but after our Saviour's death, the faith of the Gentiles was another." St Paul, who was a Jew by birth, and an apostle of the Gentiles by office, tells us the very reverse. There is one faith, of which Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, was and is the invariable object. "To him give all the prophets," as well as all the apostles, "witness, that whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." Believing in Christ, we see, is the one, constant, unalterable way, in which both Jews and Gentiles, the hearers of the prophets and the converts of the apostles, obtained pardon, life, and glory.

Had Dr —— observed this caution, he would not have spent so many needless and random words on the third proposition, which proceed upon an absolute mistake of the point. "We advocates for self-sufficiency in man!" I wonder how the ingenious Doctor can entertain such a suspicion, especially as he knows we have subscribed, we believe, and we maintain the tenth article of our Church. He has blamed us for this belief; therefore he should, in all reason, blame himself for those extravagant excursions of his pen; which are just as far from sobriety and fact, as the Antipodes are from the latitude of London. Our maxim and Mr Marshall's meaning is, Though less than nothing, though worse than nothing in ourselves, we can do all things through Christ's strengthening us. I am, &c.

LETTER CIV.

Saturday morning.

SHALL I beg you to tell Dr ——, that his beautiful Visions* were, by Dodsley the bookseller, put into the hands of a very pious and ingenious friend of mine, who proposes an alteration in the ninth line of the sixty-ninth page of the fifth edition, where he would read Jesus instead of virtue.

> At that important hour of need,
> Jesus shall prove a friend indeed.

But I am not of his opinion, unless an uniform vein of evangelical doctrine had run through the whole. This, I must confess, I could have been glad to have seen in so elegant a poem, where Spenser's fancy, and Prior's ease, are united. And I hope if the Doctor should ever write any more poetry, he will take this important hint into his consideration. Indeed he ought; for even in his Vision on Death, he has not paid the least regard to Christ our Redeemer, the conqueror of death. I presume they sell according to our wishes. May they, under the blessing of a most gracious God, impart good to the world, and bring gain to the author!

* See Letter XCVII.

If I mistake not, you are a subscribing member of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; will you be so kind as to procure for me a dozen of Bibles, and a dozen of the Bishop of Man on the Lord's Supper? I give away this to communicants, because it has the communion-service in it; and because it is more evangelical, and less exceptionable than the generality of what are called preparations for, or companions at the sacrament; too many of which books, by long prayers for each day in the week, and by injudicious representations, have sometimes, I fear, a contrary effect to what was intended. I had once a design, nor have I wholly laid it aside, of extracting from Jenks' Office of Devotion, the few leaves he has there wrote so pathetically on the sacrament, and of printing them with the communion service, after the manner of the Bishop of Man; adding on the sides suitable observations of my own, to supply Jenks' deficiencies. I propose likewise to add what Marshall says on the subject, and insert from the Bishop of Man his short, yet striking meditations on some well-chosen texts of Scripture, which will be of service to every one; particularly to those who are unaccustomed to meditate, or have no talents for it, and consequently want such an assistance to employ the time while others are receiving the bread and wine. What says my *fidus Achates* to this? Give it a place in your thoughts; and however we may determine on this, let us determine to cleave more closely to the Lord, and wait upon our God continually. "Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens." Let this be our pattern, and such our practice. To his tender care, and continual guidance, I commit you; and am cordially yours, &c.

LETTER CV.

London, Mile's-lane, April 9. 1752.

DEAR SIR,—SOON after I received your last favour, we were visited by a very alarming providence:

a fire broke out in a sugar-baker's workhouse, part of which communicated with my brother's house, and the whole was separated from us only by a court-yard, four or five yards in breadth. Three engines played from his house, and another stood ready in the dining room, in case of any unexpected exigency. We were all consternation and confusion: in the hurry, I mislaid, somewhere or other, your valuable letter, and cannot recover it by any search. I wish you would be so kind as to direct me once more to the Magazine in which your chronological observation is inserted. I shall be more particularly pleased to see difficulties of this nature cleared up; because the works of a very celebrated genius are lately published, in which he very much decries the chronology and history of the sacred Scriptures; I mean some posthumous volumes written by the late Lord Bolingbroke.

You will excuse me for not making my thankful acknowledgments sooner. The objections you started, and the answers you gave, were richly worth preserving; I am truly sorry that the afore-mentioned disaster has, I fear, deprived me of them. Have you no copy taken for your own satisfaction? With relation to my intended work, if it was in your hands, I believe you would not think it expedient to add any thing more of the argumentative kind. I fear I have been too prolix already; and if ever I should be so happy as to obtain your revisal of it, should be very desirous that you would make very free with the pruning-knife. I have no vindication, but some excuse for my delay in writing. I catched such a cold, on the late terrifying occasion, (being obliged to wade through water, in order to escape the fire), as confined me to my chamber several weeks. I mentioned to you Taylor's Treatise of Original Sin. As you have not seen the work, give me leave to transmit, as fully as I can recollect, one or two of his objections to the orthodox opinion. God is the Maker, the true and immediate Maker of all men, Job xxxi.

15. Now it is impossible that God should make our nature, and yet not make the qualities and propensities which it has when made. Therefore, whatever principles, or whatever seeds are implanted in our constitution, they cannot be principles of iniquity nor seeds of sin; because they are all infused and planted by our infinitely good and holy Creator. Such passions, appetites, propensities, cannot be sinful, because they are necessary and unavoidable, (and that cannot be sinful in me, which I can nowise avoid, help, or hinder), neither can they render us objects of God's wrath; for it is infinitely absurd, and highly dishonourable to God, to suppose he is displeased at us for what he himself has infused into our nature.

What says St James? (James iii. 9.) "Therewith curse we men, who are made after the similitude of God." The similitude of God signifies those moral endowments which distinguish the possessor, both from the brutes and the devils; and in this image, or vested with these qualifications, men are made. What then becomes of the doctrine of original sin?

St Paul speaks of people that had their understanding darkened, that were alienated in their minds, were haters of God, &c. But this is affirmed of the idolatrous heathen. The very Gentiles, according to St Paul's account, "Shew the work of the law written on their hearts, their consciences meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another." Here then are Heathens who have the work of the law (not barely discerned by their understanding, but) written on their hearts; have both the knowledge and the love of its moral precepts; with an awakened tender conscience, ever ready to act the part of an impartial reprover, or a zealous advocate; and what higher character can you give of your first-rate believer? They are also said to "do by nature the things contained in the law;" an irrefragable proof that our nature is not so depraved in point of inclination, nor so disabled with regard to its executive powers, as the doctrine of original sin supposes.

Let me request the favour of your sentiments upon the preceding objections. Your ingenious remarks on Deut. xxxiii. 13, &c. I received; I prize, and I thank you for them. May the gracious God, for a recompense, lead you farther and farther into the unsearchable treasures of wisdom hid in the Scriptures, and fill you with all wisdom and spiritual understanding. I comfort myself in thinking, that you do not in your prayers forget, dear sir, your much obliged, and truly affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER CVI.

Weston-Favell, Dec. 14. 1752.

Reverend Sir,—Little did I think, when I recommended to the public the Observations on ——*, that I should be so agreeably and amply recompensed for my occasional note—recompensed with a letter from the author; which, I assure you, was extremely welcome, not only on account of the same strain of elegance which runs through and adorns your book, but for the tender which it brought me of a very valuable accession to the small number of my friends. Your friendship, dear sir, I accept as a privilege, and shall cultivate with delight. Only I must, in common justice, forewarn you of one particular, That your social intercourses with James Hervey, will be an exercise of charity, rather than an advantageous traffic to yourself. Besides other reasons which I might too truly allege for the support of this hint, a long-continued habit of indisposition, and bodily weakness, has laid a heavy hand on my animal spirits, which (take my word for it, since I hope you will never know it by experience) both cramps the exertion, and obstructs the improvement of the intellectual faculties. You remember, however, who has said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive;" which,

* Probably the Observations on Tacitus commended by Mr Hervey, in his Letter to a Lady of Quality. See Vol. V.

I think, will hold good when applied either to the treasures of the mind or the riches of fortune.

Your approbation of any thing in my slight remarks will give me singular satisfaction; yet I should be no less obliged for your free thoughts on what should have been added, expunged, or altered. Let this, dear sir, be the first fruits of our friendship. Point out my blemishes, and supply my defects. Applause may be more soothing to my vanity; but such kind corrections will be more pleasing to my judgment, and more serviceable to our common cause. It is scarce probable that a second edition should be published, as the first was numerous; but if there should be such a demand, I am sure your animadversions would enrich and ennoble it.

I thank you for your Reflections on the Scriptures, which are perfectly just, and peculiarly animated. I cannot but wish that the vindication of their dignity, and the display of their excellency, had fallen to your share. This, I trust, is a service reserved for your pen, to be drawn with ten-fold energy and success on some future occasion. And may you, when called to such an important work, be "a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use!"

I bless God for the just notions you form concerning the Holy Spirit, and the necessity of his enlightening influences; without which the Scriptures will be a sealed book, and even the word of life a dead letter. Men of superior abilities too often lean to their own understanding, and reject the guidance, the teachings, of the Holy Ghost; not because these are not mentioned, insisted upon, promised in the gospel; but because they fancy themselves capable of comprehending, without any supernatural aid, τα μεγαλεια του Θεου. But may we, sir, be sensible, ever sensible, that all our sufficiency is of God; and not blush to be the humble pupils of the heavenly Teacher, who "hideth these things from the wise and prudent, but revealeth them unto babes." I am desirous of being taught by the labours of learned men; more

desirous of being taught by the written word of revelation; but, amidst all, and above all, to be taught of God; or, as our Liturgy very boldly, but not improperly explains the prophet, "taught by the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit."

I am pleased to hear from ——, that you are situated near that worthy gentleman Dr ——, whose works praise him in the gate; to whom belongs that noble character, "The liberal person deviseth liberal things;" to whom, I trust, will be made good that inestimable promise in its fullest extent, "By liberal things shall he stand." They shall be his witnesses at the day of eternal judgment, that his faith in Christ Jesus has neither been empty, barren, nor dead. When you have the pleasure of waiting on him, be so good as to present him with my most respectful compliments.

You are not under the least obligation to me, for bearing my testimony to your late performance. It is a debt which I owe, for the delight I received in perusing it. I wish it may soon come to a second edition; and, if my attestation to its merit is a means of introducing it into the hands of my readers, I do not doubt but it will do an honour to my taste. The present which you promise me will be very acceptable: But, my dear sir, if you have a family, or your circumstances should not be affluent, I beg you will not think of it. You see I follow your example, and speak, not as a new acquaintance, but as a bosom friend.

Should it ever be in my power to do you any service, I can suggest a method whereby you might repay, more than repay the favour. That is, by taking the trouble of revising a little work which I have upon the anvil, and bestowing upon it your free remarks. A few touches from your pen would, if the thing be not incorrigibly bad, very much improve it. Had I not seen a display of your judgment and delicacy in the Observations, &c. I should not have asked such an instance of your friendship; whereas

now I cannot but earnestly desire it, shall highly esteem it, and shall very thankfully acknowledge it.

"Not by might, nor by strength, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." And we may truly say, Not by polished diction, or brilliant sentiment; not by the arts of persuasion, or the force of reasoning; but by God Almighty's blessing, our attempts are prevalent, and our books successful. This is my comfort, and this my confidence:—as an author, I would aim, singly aim, at the glory of my Divine Master, and the furtherance of his everlasting gospel. Then I would resign the issue of my endeavours wholly to his providence and grace, who can, out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, perfect his praise. Nevertheless I would by no means neglect the recommendations of a graceful composition. I would be glad to have the apples of gold, which are the truths of our holy religion, conveyed or set in pictures of silver. For this we have the genius of human nature, which, generally speaking, must be pleased, in order to be profited. For this we have the precedent of the wisest of men, who "sought and found out acceptable words," even when that which was written was the truth of God. If it is consistent with your other engagements to oblige me in this very substantial manner, ——, who undertakes to transmit this letter, has promised to convey a little parcel to your hands.

I wish you, sir, what the eloquent apostle styles, (Col. ii. 2.) "the riches of the full assurance of understanding;" and, turning my wishes into prayers, take my leave, and profess myself, reverend sir, your truly affectionate friend and brother, &c.

LETTER CVII.

My dear Friend,—The apostle warns us not to be "carried about with every wind of doctrine." I think Marshall has answered great part of Dr ——'s letter (see pages 96, 97, of the 8vo edition),

Pray desire Dr ——, at his leisure, to shew wherein he suspects Marshall to be unscriptural. You may depend upon it, I shall appeal from the Doctor's determination, unless he supports it by Scripture. The poor and unlearned generally understand the gospel better than the accomplished scholars; because it pleases God, by the foolishness (see 1 Cor. i. 21.). of preaching, to save them that believe. God long ago foretold, that but few would understand and receive evangelical truth: "Who hath believed our report?" says Isaiah: Very, very few. To this St Paul adds; "Not many wise, not many mighty are called." The attributes of the Deity will stand clear from all just impeachment, if we demonstrate that his doctrine is most excellently calculated to humble the sinner, to exalt the Saviour, and promote filial obedience. Let the objections and misapprehensions of such learned and ingenious men teach us to distrust our own ability; not to lean to our own understandings, but seek more earnestly for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation.

Dr —— thinks the doctrine delivered in Marshall's book to be inconsistent with Scripture, and repugnant to reason: whereas I think it contains the very marrow of Scripture; consequently, is reason in its highest refinement. I daily experience it to be the medicine of my better life, or the most sovereign means to comfort the conscience and purify the heart. If the Doctor had leisure, I should be glad to hear what a person of his fine sense and keen discernment could say against my favourite author.

Have you any author of eloquence and spirit who has written either a treatise or sermon on the subject of true holiness, its nature, its necessity, its excellency? If you could furnish me with such a treatise, I would endeavour to put his displays of holiness into Theron's mouth, and Aspasio should shew the manner of acting, all on evangelical principles. Has Atterbury said any thing of this kind, or Foster in his sermons? I wish you would search your own

stock of ideas. Search your most admired Arminian writers, and produce the noble qualities, the important duties, which constitute the dignity or the happiness of our nature; and I will undertake, I will attempt at least, to point out the expeditious and easy way to them, all on Mr Marshall's plan.

The Doctor is strangely vague in his argumentation. On the two first topics he does little else but ramble; the last he absolutely mistakes. I do not affirm that we have sufficient strength. I wonder how he could suppose this, when he knows it is our persuasion that we have not power so much as cordially to will that which is good. But a persuasion that God will give us sufficient strength, this is the point we plead for, the privilege to which we stand entitled by the gospel.

You forgot, my dear friend, to send me Jennings on Original Sin. If you think Mrs —— is in want, I will very willingly give her two guineas. Who would not give away their superfluities for his sake who gave his very life for our sins? O that I had also strength of body, that I might spend what is more valuable than gold in his sacred service! But forbear, my soul: his will be done. I hope God may incline your heart to review those manuscripts, and strengthen your judgment to discern their improprieties. I really have no fondness to appear again in print; I had much rather decline what requires any labour of the brain. But since I have proceeded so far in the work, since there is some expectation of it, and many prayers put up for it, I cannot be easy when I offer to discontinue it. Do, my dear friend, give me a little of your time, take some pains in my behalf; it is the last trouble of this kind I shall ever give you. For should this piece be finished, never, never will I attempt another. Who knows, but if you help me in this work, I may converse with you when I am dead; and perhaps a very weak hint from the pen of an old friend may be blessed to your comfort, when he

is gone hence, and no more seen! Till then, after then, and for ever, I hope to be affectionately yours, &c.

P. S.—Pray let me hear the issue of your interview with the gentleman. I hope the God of wisdom and of power will give you an irreproachable conduct, and a decent boldness. Why should we be "afraid of man that shall die, and the son of man that shall be as grass; and forget the Lord our Maker, who stretched out the heavens, and laid the foundation of the earth?" Fear not; you have done nothing in this whole affair but what, I am verily persuaded, is pleasing to him whose loving-kindness is better than life.

Oh that it was worth your while to wish, and that it was safe for me to grant, an absolution of my sentence against you: but you must not come to hear me so long as the small-pox is in your town, as many of my people will be terrified at your presence. I will tell you one good thing that was in our sermon last Sunday; this portion of Scripture, viz. "With the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption," Psalm cxxx. 7. And this, all this is for you, my dear friend; and for thee, my sinful soul. O let us receive the blessings; let us embrace the blessings! For it is our gracious Master's will, by these sweet, inviting, generous methods, to win us from a deluding world, and win us to his blessed self.—Adieu.

LETTER CVIII.

DEAR SIR,—MY poor father is in some respects better, but he is as weak and helpless as ever. Most of his time passes in a kind of dosing sleep. He has no inclination to talk; takes little notice of persons or things. I hope his great work is done, his interest in Christ secured, and his soul sanctified by grace. For indeed, such a state of languishing is as unfit to work out salvation, and lay hold on eternal life, as to grind at the mill, or to run a race. O

that we all may give diligent attention to the things which belong to our peace, before the inability of sickness, and the night of death approaches. I sent for the Poem on Sickness, by Mr Thomson of Queen's College, Oxford, and was surprised to find it a four-shilling and sixpenny piece. It is, I think, a loose and rambling performance; some good lines, but a great deal of it nothing at all to the purpose; not comparable, in point of elegance, propriety, and beauty, to his Hymn on May. However, I would not have it depreciated, methinks, because it speaks worthily of the Christian religion, and the Rock of our hopes, Christ Jesus.—Adieu, my dear friend, ever yours, &c.

LETTER CIX.

DEAR SISTER,—I HOPE this will find my father better. I heartily wish, and daily pray that the God of everlasting compassions may comfort him under his sorrows, may sanctify his afflictions, and restore him to his health, that he may recover more spiritual strength before he goes hence, and is no more seen.

I sent my brother some books, and humbly beseech the Giver of every good gift to accompany them with his heavenly blessing; for what he blesses is blessed indeed.

I could be truly glad to hear your complaints are removed; but if they continue, do not be discouraged. "Whom the Lord loveth he chastiseth." God had but one Son without sin, but none without sufferings. Oh that his infinite goodness may sanctify your tribulations, that they may be a means of weaning you from the world, and bringing you to Jesus Christ! Then you will one day say with the Psalmist, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted."—I am, &c.

LETTER CX.

DEAR SIR,—YOUR observations are perfectly just, and Dr Doddridge's remarks are admirably judi-

cious; his alterations are indeed excellent and charming. Oh, may they be equally impressive on me as I transcribe them, and on all that may hereafter read them! Many most solid and valuable corrections has the Doctor already made in my little piece, but, in my opinion, these are beyond them all. I cannot but wish he had leisure to have went through the whole with his improving strokes; but, as the business of his academy and ministry is so various, and so important, I cannot prevail with myself to make such a request. I will try, and do the best I can to proceed on the plan which he has formed, and to follow (*magno licet intervallo*) the example he has set. Be so good as to make my most grateful acknowledgments: Let your tongue speak, for really my pen cannot write, how greatly I am obliged to him. I will venture to turn, what was used formerly as an imprecation, into a wish and a blessing on this occasion, "May God do so to him, and more also!"

Oh that our writings may be accompanied with the blessed Spirit; and that the spirit of our writings may be operative on our hearts, and apparent in our conversation.—Ever yours, &c.

LETTER CXI.

Mile's-lane, Saturday morning.

My dear Friend,—If I am tolerably well, I will wait upon Dr C—— on Tuesday morning. He has a delicate genius, and I dare say he is an excellent physician. O that his fine parts may be grafted into the true olive tree, and bring forth fruit unto God. If Providence permits us to meet, I hope to have some evangelical discourse with him.

Sure you could not go to London without putting to your heart some of your own important questions, under the heads of self-examination. Have you indulged yourself in needless amusements, needless diversions of any kind? Have you employed your time usefully to yourself or to others? My dearest

friend, remember in what book, by whose hands, several such like questions are written! I fear you have not so much as spoke one word for Christ since you have entered the metropolis, though you must have had so many opportunities. O why do you thus bury your sprightly talents in a napkin? Edify your neighbours by your conversation. What a loss has Mr —— and Mr ——, and others of your correspondents, sustained by your forgetting or disusing the language of Zion? I have lately purchased Lowman's Exposition of the Revelation. Give me leave to refer you to the fifth verse of the second chapter, "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and do thy first works." Pray lend me Lowman on the Civil Government of the Hebrews, which I hear is a most excellent book, and illustrates many obscure passages in the Bible.

Do you keep a diary as you used to do, a secret history of your heart and conduct, and take notice of the manner in which your time is spent, and of the strain which runs through your discourse? Do you minute down your sins of omission as well as of commission, and observe the frame of your spirit in religious duties? Do you register your most secret faults; those faults to which none but your own conscience is privy, none but the all-seeing eye discerns? And do you often review these interesting memoirs? remembering, at the same time, that for all these things God will one day call you into judgment. Keeping a diary is the way to know ourselves, and of all other preparatives it best disposes us to prayer, and to seek in earnest after that blessed Redeemer who died to save sinners, and through whom alone we can ever expect to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Adieu, my dear friend. God in heaven bless and protect you! I hope to see you ere long; and am, in the mean time, with true regard, yours faithfully and affectionately, &c.

LETTER CXII.

Weston, Feb. 3. 1753.

DEAR SIR,—I AM greatly obliged for your repeated favours, and truly sensible of my obligations. I have not acknowledged them so punctually as I ought; but I hope you will excuse this neglect, and ascribe it to the real cause, ill health and weak spirits, which cramp my mind, unnerve my hand, and make me trespass upon the candour of all my correspondents. Why did I say hope? I see you do excuse me. Of this your last letter, transmitted to Mr Moses Browne, is a clear and pleasing proof, which I safely received, and for which I sincerely thank you; as I bless the God of grace, and the God of wisdom, for giving you so friendly a temper, and so discerning a judgment.

The little piece * which you have so judiciously retouched and improved, was not written for public view; but I thought, after frequent prayer to God for direction, and attending to the workings of his Providence, it was his will that it should be published. I was sensible of its many defects, but upon his Almighty power I depend for its usefulness: he can bid even a worm thresh the mountains, and make his strength perfect, illustrious, triumphant, in the most abject weakness. Blessed be his holy name, that the servants of Jesus Christ, and the advocates for his sacred cause, have such an arm to rely on. If another edition should be required, I will take leave to enrich my piece with your remarks; and let me beg of you to favour me with your opinion in relation to some additions which I have occasionally penned. Page 111, after line 22, add,—But what shall we say to a mistake in the sacred chronology; a palpable mistake pointed out by his lordship,

* This little piece was, Remarks on Lord Bolingbroke's Letters on the History of the Old Testament, in a Letter to a Lady of Quality, inserted Vol. V.

proved to be such by the testimony of profane history—Samaria said to be taken by the king of Assyria, twelve years after the Assyrian empire was no more? For my own part, I make neither hesitation nor scruple to reply, If Isaiah and Herodotus * vary; if the authors of the Kings, the Chronicles, and several of the prophets, differ from the Greek historians, I am under no difficulty in settling my judgment and taking my side. When profane writers agree with the sacred, I admit both accounts; when they disagree, I reject the former, and acquiesce in the latter. Nor can I tax myself with any thing unreasonable or arbitrary in this proceeding; for surely those writers who are able to foretell future events, must deserve the preference in relating past. Those witnesses who dwelt on the spot, and were personally concerned in affairs, are more to be relied on than those who lived in a distant country, and wrote in a distant age. With regard to the case specified by my Lord Bolingbroke, I believe the attentive reader will find the error, not in the sacred chronology, but in his lordship's apprehension. The kingdom of Assyria was not at that period no more; but, like the Irish or Scotch crown to the English, united to the Babylonian; of which, when the holy writers treat, they call it sometimes by one name, and sometimes by the other.

Page 15, after established, insert, "If Isaiah speaks by divine inspiration, when he says of the formidable Sennacherib, The Lord of Hosts shall stir up a scourge for him, according to the slaughter of Midian; surely that memorable defeat, recorded in the book of Judges, must be an undoubted fact. Could the Spirit, which is infallible, give such a sanction to a story which was fictitious?" When the same Isaiah prays in that elevated and ardent strain, "Awake, awake; put on strength, O arm of the

* Herodotus does not differ from the prophet Isaiah and the Scripture account of the empire of Assyria; it is Cresias and Justin that vary from it.

Lord! awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old! Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon? Art thou not it, which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep? that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?" can we reasonably imagine, that the prophet would plead lying vanities before the God of truth; that he would ground his own and his countrymen's faith on a popular romance; or on what my lord calls, "a purely human, and therefore fallible," narrative?

Does not the blessed Jesus describe the manner, and illustrate the efficacy of his own death, by the serpent lifted up in the wilderness, and its all-healing virtue on the wounded Israelites? Does not the holy apostle enumerate several of the most wonderful miracles, wrought for the deliverance, the preservation, the chastisement of Israel, and from these occurrences deduce the most important admonitions, urge the most forcible exhortations? Such references, made by such persons, not only suppose, but prove more than bare allusions: they are also ratifications; and demonstrate with an evidence, clear as the wisdom, firm as the faithfulness of an incarnate God, that the writers of these accounts have neither deceived us nor were deceived themselves. Should it be said, that these passages are chiefly in the Mosaical history, and therefore give no authority to the other historical memoirs; I would ask, Does not St Paul (Rom. ii. 23.) quote a passage from the book of Kings? Does he not build upon the passage as a sure and indubitable truth? Does he not dignify the book with what I may term the incommunicable character in writing; and style it, by way of superlative eminence, the Scripture? Is it not undeniably certain, that the Jewish youths, and Timothy among the rest, were instructed in the historical as well as the prophetical volumes of the Old Testament? Does of judges recommend all volu est estimation, by pron

them holy writings? Does he not clearly manifest their divine extract, when he so nobly displays their divine effects; they "are able to make thee wise to salvation, through faith which is in Jesus Christ?" What then shall we think of Lord Bolingbroke's declaration, which I could not read without grief, and cannot transcribe without horror: "The Bible history appears to every one, who reads it without prepossession, and with attention, to be nothing more than a compilation of old traditions, and an abridgment of old records." In short, my lady, the doctrinal and historical parts are indissolubly, &c.

Page 20, line 18, after the word "vigilance;" and instead of the eight following lines, insert, The number of whose verses, especially in the Pentateuch, was computed; and the arrangement of the very letters, for the space of many centuries, known; whether, before the coming of Christ, the spirit of prophecy, which confessedly existed in the Jewish church, was not sufficient to prevent, or else sure to detect, any corrupt innovations; whether, after the coming of Christ, the jealous eye which the Jews and Christians had on each other, was not an insurmountable bar against any material alterations.

Page 21, line 2, after "composition," add, "Though we should rescue our sacred books from the imputation of spurious additions, this will not, with my lord at least, either establish or retrieve their character." They contain, he says, a very imperfect account of the Israelites themselves, of their settlements in the land of Canaan, of which, by the way, they never had entire, and scarce ever peaceable possession. The sacred narrative is a summary account of the Jewish affairs; but is it therefore to be censured as an imperfect account. It is an epitome, rather than a complete history; but has it not all the qualities of a perfect epitome? Those particular facts are selected which have a more especial reference to the interests of religion and the kingdom of the Messiah; in which the Divine Providence is

most eminently conspicuous, and from which mankind may be most effectually edified. Instead of finding fault with the writers for not being copious, when their professed aim was to be concise, a true critic would rather admire the felicity of their narration; which, though a foreign history of the remotest antiquity, relating to a people of the most singular manners and peculiar customs, expressed in an absolute, dead language, and comprised in the shortest compass, is nevertheless so clear, so intelligible, and so very satisfactory.

But they contain a very imperfect account of the Israelitish settlement in Canaan. Is it possible for a person who has read the book of Joshua to advance such a position? Was ever any thing of the kind described more minutely or with greater accuracy? Here we have the general distribution of the land, and the extent of each particular allotment. The borders of the several divisions are marked out as with a line, and the cities in the several cantons mentioned by name. In short, this whole transaction is so circumstantially displayed, that some readers, agreeing with my lord in their disaffection to the Bible, but diametrically opposite in their taste of literature, have thought it particularized even to tediousness. However, this particularity of description was highly expedient, not only to supersede any such objection as his lordship has raised, but also to ascertain, by an unalterable standard, the boundaries of the tribes; to prevent any encroachments upon the inheritance of each other; and to demonstrate the wonderful agreement between the ancient prediction of Jacob, the more recent prophecy of Moses, and the situation, the limits, the produce, of the territories respectively assigned to the patriarchal families. Jacob foretold, that Zebulon should dwell at the haven of the sea, whose portion actually lay on either side of the sea of Galilee, and extended to the Mediterranean. Moses foretold, that the Lord should dwell between Benjamin's shoulders, or t[h]

temple be placed at the extremity of his borders. But I would refer my reader to Gen. xlix. and Deut. xxxiii. in which chapters, compared with the distinguishing circumstances of the several tribes, he will discern a most surprising spirit of prophecy, planning out with precision what was afterwards determined by lot, and foreshewing with exactness what was not come into existence.

The Israelites, it is added, never had entire, and scarce ever peaceable possession of the land. This, my lord imagines, must imply an inconsistency between the divine promise and the issue of things; therefore, to animadvert upon it, he digresses from his subject. But how will his lordship's animadversion comport with the testimony of Joshua? Just as well as light consists with darkness. The Lord gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that he sware unto their fathers; Joshua xxi. 43, 44. Is it not demonstrable, from Joshua's topographical draught of the country, and from the habitations allotted to the several tribes, that they possessed the bulk of the land? What little remained in the occupation of the Canaanites, bore no more proportion to the heritage of Israel, than the addition of a fringe, or the insertion of a loop, bears to the whole dimensions of the garment. That they possessed all this, and that they possessed no more, were circumstances equally consonant to the prophetic declarations of Scripture. The one a punctual execution of the minatory; the other an evident accomplishment of the promissory. He that said to their pious progenitor, "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever," Gen. xiii. 14, 15.; for ever, is evidently promised on condition of their obedience; whereas, in case of disobedience, the very

reverse is threatened, Deut. iv. 25, 26.; the same said unto their degenerate offspring, "Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you; know for a certainty, that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you," Joshua xxiii. 12, 13. My lord must forget this last particular, or neglect to compare it with the preceding; otherwise he would have seen, in these prophecies and their corresponding events, a signal manifestation of God Almighty's goodness, justice, and faithfulness: goodness in giving what he gave; justice, in withholding what he withheld; and faithfulness, in both dispensations.

As for peaceable possession, we have already heard the witness of Joshua; a very sufficient witness, one would presume, as he was generalissimo of the Jewish forces, and superintendent-general of the affair. However, let us search the records of the nation: here we meet with long periods of peace, under the government of their first illustrious commander, and under the subsequent administration of their judges; "The land had rest from war," Joshua xiv. 15. "The land had rest forty years," Judges iii. 11. "The land had rest eighty years," Judges iii. 30. We find the same face of public repose in the reigns of David and Solomon, Asa and Jehoshaphat; and not of one only, but of every righteous and religious king; or, if peace departed for a season, victory supplied its place, and success crowned their arms. The blessing of national tranquillity was never promised to the Israelites absolutely, but upon condition of fidelity to their almighty Sovereign. Whenever they were entitled to it, by virtue of this promise, and their corresponding obedience, they never failed to enjoy it. Whenever they forfeited their title, either by revolting to idolatry, or confiding in idolaters, they were constantly punished with intestine commotions or foreign invasion. What shall we infer from hence? a conclusion any way prejudicial to

the sacred annals? No; but greatly to their glory. From hence it appears, that they are indeed the annals of heaven: A register, not merely of political conduct, but of divine dispensations: The awful and important memoirs of a real Theocracy, in which, according to the emphatical language of Isaiah, "the Lord was their Judge, the Lord was their Lawgiver, the Lord was their King."

But these facts, my lord complains, are related in a confused manner. To which I can answer, We have each reign in the proper order of time. The parentage of the sovereign is specified, and his general character given. We are informed at what age he ascended the throne, and how long he swayed the sceptre; who were the eminent persons, and what the remarkable incidents, which distinguished his government; how he died, and where he was buried. Is this confusion? where then shall we look for regular arrangement? Perhaps his lordship means the interchangeable narration of occurrences in the kingdom of Judah and the kingdom of Israel. This, I own, is observed in the latter parts of the sacred history. But this can no more be called confusion, than the disposition or varying colours in some beautiful piece of mosaic can be called irregularity. It is rather a fine contrast, or that pleasing diversification in the series of historical writing, which my lord's poetical friend so justly admires in the decorations of a rural seat:—

> Here order in variety you see,
> Where all things differ, and yet all agree.—Pope.

Page 61, to line 19, suppose I subjoin the following note: "Joshua and Samuel wrought miracles: Isaiah and Jeremiah foretold future events. Though it is not absolutely certain that all the sacred historians were prophets, yet it is highly probable, from 1 Chron. xxix. 29. This, however, is unquestionable, that their writings were reviewed and approved by men of prophetical gifts; and the approbation of such judges must give a sanction, little inferior to

the authority which their own compositions would claim."

Page 71, at the top of the page, add, My lord tells us, "That the Scripture history contains an account of the divisions and apostasies, the repentances and relapses, triumphs and defeats of the Israelites, under the occasional government of their judges, and under that of their kings, and of the Galilean and Samaritan captivity." Whether this is mentioned by way of derogation, let the judicious reader determine. I would beg leave to observe, that these occurrences, related in the scriptural manner, with a continual regard to the superintending hand of Providence, are some of the most weighty and interesting materials that can enrich the historical page. None so well calculated to teach nations, to admonish kings, and improve posterity. His lordship might have said, with the utmost veracity; and, I think, in common justice he ought to have said, They contained also the most unparalleled instances of national success and personal achievements; the most beautiful and affecting pictures of virtue, delineated through all its branches, in a multiplicity of living characters; than which nothing can be better accommodated to excite the attention, and charm the imagination; to touch the heart, and impress the passions; to inflame them with the love, and mould them into the image of universal holiness.

Here we behold a people always destitute of cavalry, the main strength of the battle; yet always a match, and more than a match, for their most powerful adversaries, so long as they maintained a dutiful reliance on their God: A people, who left their frontiers naked and defenceless at three stated solemnities in every year; yet never were invaded at this critical juncture by their most vigilant enemies, so long as they persisted in obedience to their almighty Protector: A people, whose very land, as well as its inhabitants, was wonderful—both the scene and the subject of miracles; for, after five years

unintermitted tillage, (which one would imagine should have exhausted its prolific powers), it yielded constantly a double increase, in order to supply the demands of the succeeding year; when, by the Divine appointment, all was to lie fallow and uncultivated. Here we behold men of such singular and exalted piety, that they walked with God, and were translated into the realms of glory without passing through the gates of death: Men of such undaunted courage, that they have rebuked princes, confronted angry monarchs, and smiled at the severest menaces of a tyrant, whose bare frown has made the world to tremble: Men of such heroic abilities, that one of them has slain hundreds; another of them has put his thousands to flight; and both by the most contemptible weapons; a third, without any weapon, has given chase to the roaring lion, and the raging bear; and rent them to pieces, or smitten them to the earth: Men, that have been empowered to shut or open the sluices of the sky; have commanded the ground to expand her horrid jaws, and swallow up the living; or bid the grave unlock her adamantine doors, and restore the dead: Men, who have walked amidst the burning fiery furnace, as composed in their spirits, and as secure in their persons, as if they had been taking the air in some calm, sequestered, shady bower. In a word, here is a detail of such marvellous things, as no eye hath seen performed in any other nation under heaven; no ear has heard related by any other annalist or biographer whatever; and, though they are the very sanctity of truth, yet such as never entered into the imagination, even of romance itself, to conceive. "Ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth; and ask from one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as these great things are, or hath been heard like them," Deut. iv. 32. This, though spoken of the miracles wrought in Egypt, and the wonders manifested in the wilderness, is

applicable to almost the whole tenor of the scriptural history. My remarks, &c.

Your opinion with relation to the preceding paragraphs will be received as a favour, and attended, I hope, with a blessing. I find I am blamed for animadverting on his lordship's style, (page 36.) for not giving his lordship the title of Noble, not treating him with a respect due to his dignity. I have trespassed, it is farther alleged, against the rules of candour and benevolence, page 33, 34, and page 86. I know you have a large share of patience; may the Lord Jesus (of whose fulness his saints receive even grace for grace) multiply upon you, both this, and every other fruit of the Spirit! Pray, what do you apprehend to be the precise meaning of St Paul's expression, Rom. i. 17. "From faith to faith," as it is translated?

I should be much obliged if you would let me know, what are some of the most valuable books which you have met with on various subjects of importance? what little treatise is most proper to put into the hands of illiterate people? what are some of the most judicious and improving compositions in biography? what the most sound and weighty authors, that might be recommended to a young student in divinity? You see I am always in the begging strain; the language of my letters is like the horse-leech's two daughters, Give! give! All I can do by way of return is, to beseech the King immortal, invisible, the only wise God, to give you all spiritual blessings in heavenly things. To do this, with all the ability which God shall bestow, will be as truly pleasing to, as it is justly due from, dear sir, your much obliged, and very affectionate friend.

LETTER CXIII.

Weston-Favell, May 19. 1753.

DEAR SIR,—I HAVE lately been somewhat busied in preparing a sermon to be preached before the

clergy, at our archdeacon's visitation; and to my weak nerves and languid spirits a little business is a toil. A commentator, with whom I wish you may long be unacquainted, has taught me the meaning of Solomon's description, "The grasshopper shall be a burden."

This, I hope, will apologize for my delay in answering more fully your last very obliging favour. More fully, I say, because, in a former letter, I acknowledged the receipt of a parcel with your remarks. Let me once more, dear sir, return my sincerest thanks for those judicious and delicate observations. They are so valuable, that I cannot but be very desirous to have the other parts of my proposed work undergo the same scrutiny, and receive a polish from the same hand. If this kind office will not too much interrupt your own studies, give me a permission to send another packet; and withal a direction, how I shall transmit it to you most expeditiously.

You will easily perceive, from several hints, perhaps from the whole tenor of my writings, that your new friend is what people would call a moderate Calvinist. Your sentiments, in some particulars, may differ from mine. Freely object wherever this is the case: I assure you I can bear, I shall delight, to have my notions sifted; nor am I so attached to any favourite scheme but I can readily relinquish it, when Scripture and reason convince me it is wrong. When I see wise and learned men forming opinions different from mine, I hope it will make me diffident of my own judgment; teach me "not to lean to my own understanding;" and prompt me to apply more earnestly for that blessed Spirit, whose office it is "to lead into all truth."

I shall be glad to hear that the work you have in hand is going on with expedition. What a privilege will it be, and what a distinguishing favour, if the great eternal God vouchsafes to make use of our pens to bring any glory to his name, or impart any spiritual good to his people! To no occasion is the wise

man's exhortation more applicable: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." I have a treatise entitled, Dr Hildrop's Husbandman's Spiritual Companion; but never read a page in it, nor ever heard a character of it. I have a discourse upon the same subject amongst the writings of Mr Flavel: it is a long time since I saw it, and then I only dipped into it, so that I cannot pretend to give a character of it; only I think, in general, that Flavel abounds with fine sentiments, exalted piety; and his language, for the most part, is expressive and beautiful.

Possibly you will wonder that I should have had the treatise you inquire after so long, and not have perused a single page of the book; and you justly might, in case I had bought it: But it came to me by inheritance. My study is composed of the books that were collected by my father and grandfather; among which there are multitudes that I shall continue a stranger to as long as I live, though they stand at my right hand and my left every day. I want to be better acquainted with God's holy word; to have its inestimable truths lodged in my memory, its heavenly doctrines impressed upon my heart; that my tempers may take their fashion from it, that my private conversation may be seasoned with it, and my public ministrations enriched by it. Thus, dear sir, may the word of Christ dwell in us richly!

Will you give me leave to lay before you a plan of the work? (part of which has already received, and the remainder humbly requests your improving touches): viz. Sincere obedience not sufficient for our justification. The design of God's law, to convince of sin, and bring to Christ. Some farther objections urged and answered:* the whole summed up. Our friends part, but agree to correspond. Theron, more attentively observing his heart and life, is convinced of his guilty state; and begins to see the ne-

* See page 193.

cessity of a better righteousness than his own; desires to see what can be alleged in support of the imputation of Christ's righteousness. This occasions some letters from Aspasio, wherein the point is proved from the Articles and Homilies of our Church; from the writings of our most eminent divines; from the Old and New Testament. The excellency of this righteousness displayed, both from its matchless perfection and the dignity of the Author. A letter or two from Theron, by way of carrying on the epistolary intercourse, relating to the wonders of creation, as they appear both in the sea and on the land; chiefly calculated to manifest the goodness of the Creator, not without a view to the main subject. The influence of this righteousness on moral virtue and evangelical holiness. Our friends brought together again. Theron, under discouraging apprehensions. The freeness of grace, and of the gift of righteousness. Discourse on faith, by which we are united to Christ, and interested in his righteousness. The noble, beneficial, and delightful use to be made of this doctrine. Theron relapses into sins of infirmity; his faith shaken; supports proper for such a state. Sanctification; its nature, its principles, its progress. Aspasio seized with a sudden and fatal illness; his sentiments and behaviour in his last moments.

These, dear sir, are the stamina of my intended piece. Oh that he, who educes so many millions of elegant leaves, lovely flowers, and graceful plants, from the seeds of spring, may enable this enfeebled hand to dilate, fill up, and finish the whole!

As soon as I conclude this epistle, I write to a very ingenious friend of yours; with whom, several years ago, I had begun to form an acquaintance; but my departure from Oxford, and other accidents, interrupted the intercourse for several years; and I was informed, to my unfeigned sorrow, that Mr —— was dead. But a letter lately received from him most agreeably undeceived me, and brought a very welcome overture for a renewal of our corres-

pondence. God Almighty grant, that all our social communication may be a happy means, not only of cherishing our affection, and refining our taste, but also of quickening our love to the blessed Jesus, and animating our zeal for his sacred interests; or, as the apostle expresses my wish, with an energy which no language but his own can reach, that they may be subservient and effectual εις παροξυσμον αγαπης και καλων εργων.

One or two articles I forgot, in exhibiting to you my plan. But this* will direct where they are to be introduced. "The corruption of our nature demonstrated, first from Scripture, then from experience. Between which, to relieve or entertain the reader, is inserted a dialogue on the admirable formation and economy of the human body." The visitation sermon I mentioned in the beginning, though perfectly plain and artless, is in the press. It will wait upon you in the next parcel, as soon as I have the favour of your answer. It is printed for the relief of a poor afflicted child, as a short advertisement will inform the world. The person to whose management it is consigned, informs me, that he has given orders for an impression of two thousand, besides a hundred and fifty which I have bespoke for myself. Would this circumstance recommend it to your beneficent and worthy friend Dr ——? I may now no longer look upon it as a discourse delivered by me, but as an agent for the miserable, and an advocate for the distressed. I should therefore be very glad, and much obliged, if he would (in case he approves the performance) purchase some of them in order to give away. Of this he may be assured, that by every one of which he shall so dispose, he will do a real act of charity to a diseased and crippled youth; and I shall not cease to pray, that the God of infinite goodness may accompany the piece† with his divine blessing,

* See page 191.

† His sermon, entitled, "The Cross of Christ the Christian's Glory," inserted Vol. V.

and make the gift an act of spiritual charity to the reader's soul. Be pleased to present my most respectful compliments to the Doctor; and give me leave to expect, not a line, but a sheet filled with your thoughts. Then I shall promise myself one thing more, that you will, in the speed of your favour, as well as in the worth of its contents, exceed, greatly exceed, dear sir, your truly affectionate, and very much obliged friend, &c.

LETTER CXIV.

Weston-Favell, Aug. 18. 1753.

DEAR SIR,—I HAVE now procured some franks; and lest the want of this vehicle should retard the delight and improvement which I always receive from your correspondence, I take leave to enclose one. It is for your use, but my benefit.

I received the parcel, and owe you my thanks for the present. I wonder that you should be backward to gratify Mr ——. Certainly you have truth on your side. The arguments are nervous and conclusive, clearly and (for the most part) concisely stated, urged with propriety and a becoming warmth; yet without any of that "wrath of man which worketh not the righteousness of God," but rather (for I apprehend there is a μωσις in the expression) obstructs its advance, both in ourselves and others. If I was in your case, I would let my arrow fly as far as Providence is pleased to carry it; and I beseech the blessed God to prosper it, that it may give a mortal blow to error, and co-operate with his own holy word in being profitable προς ωφελειαν. Now I mention Mr ——, pray let me desire you to ask, when you write to him again, whether he received, some months ago, a letter from me. If it miscarried, I shall with pleasure supply its place with another; for though I have now but very few correspondents, and my enfeebled constitution will allow me to write but few letters, I shall strive hard to keep up an in-

tercourse with those gentlemen from whom I expect to have my taste refined, or my mind improved. And among that number I reckon Mr ——.

I shall sincerely rejoice to hear that your eye is strengthened, and your health confirmed. How valuable are these blessings! especially to those who employ them for the honour, and devote them to the service of Christ. I wish you had taken minutes of what you saw most remarkable in your tour through Westmoreland and Cumberland. A description of those counties would be very acceptable to us, who inhabit a more regular and better cultivated spot. Described in your language, and embellished with your imagination, such an account might be highly pleasing to all; and grafted with religious improvements, might be equally edifying. Such kind of writings suit the present taste. We do not love close thinking. That is most likely to win our approbation which extenuates the fancy, without fatiguing the attention. Since this is the disposition of the age, let us endeavour to catch men by guile, turn even a foible to their advantage, and bait the gospel-hook agreeably to the prevailing taste. In this sense, "become all things to all men."

Permit me to ask, Whether you have yet seen *Witsius de Œconomia Fœderum?* I wish, for my own sake, that you was somewhat acquainted with this author; because, if you should be inclined to know the reason and foundation of my sentiments on any particular point, Witsius might be my spokesman; he would declare my mind better than I could myself.

Conversing some time ago with a very ingenious gentleman, he made an observation which I think is new and curious; I should be glad of your opinion, whether you think it rational and solid. It was upon these words, Βαπτισμων διδαχης, επιθεσεως τε χειρων, Heb. vi. 2. This passage is generally supposed, especially by the writers of the established church, to denote the sacrament of baptism, and the rite of confirma-

tion. With regard to the latter, my friend queried, Whether the practice of confirmation can be allowed to constitute one of the fundamentals (θεμελια) of Christianity? With regard to the former, can it be shewn, that the apostle, in any other place, calls the ordinance of baptism βαπτισμοι, in the plural number? May not then the clause more properly refer to two eminent Jewish usages; the various purifications made by washings, and the imposition of hands on the peculiar victims? The one of which represented a purity of heart and life; the other was expressive of a translation of punishment from the offerer to his sacrifice. Then we have signified, in language familiar to the Hebrews, and by images with which they were perfectly acquainted, the sanctification of the Spirit, and the substitution of Christ in our stead. What seems to corroborate this conjecture is, the vast importance of these two articles. They are the two grand distinguishing peculiarities of the Christian scheme: without them, every treatise upon fundamentals must be extremely defective.

I am much pleased with your remark on a certain learned ——. The heart surely should be engaged in the preacher's office, as well as the head.

> Are passions then the Pagans of the soul?
> Reason alone baptized, alone ordain'd,
> To touch things sacred?

The great apostle was fervent in spirit, as well as cogent in arguing. He beseeches, conjures, and charges his people. He adds prayers to his entreaties, and tears to his prayers. When he reasons, conviction shines; when he exhorts, pathos glows. May your discourses, dear sir, be strong with the one, warm with the other, and by both be happily instrumental "to turn sinners from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins," Acts xxvi. 18. We have very wet unkindly weather for the harvest. May it teach us all to see our dependence on that Divine hand, which giveth rain from heaven and

fruitful seasons. May it stir us up to long more ardently for that inheritance which is incorruptible, as well as undefiled; whose character is perfection, and whose duration is eternity. Into this, dear sir, may you, and many of your hearers, many of your readers, in due time, have an abundant entrance! and there find, as a monument of mercy, and a trophy of redeeming grace, your truly affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER CXV.

Weston, Oct. 28. 1753.

And must I resume my correspondences? Does my dear Mr —— join with several other friends, to render me inexcusably rude, if I neglect writing any longer? Then, with the divine assistance, I will again take up my pen, though an incessant series of infirmities has wore it to the very stumps; for which reason I had thrown it aside, with an intention to continue silent and inactive, as a dead man out of mind.

To make some reparation for my past negligence, I acknowledge your late favour without any delay. Yesterday I received it, and to-day I answer it; even though I might justly plead weariness as an excuse for a dilatory conduct. I have this afternoon been preaching to a crowded audience. The Lord Jesus Christ grant it may be an edified one! You would be surprised, and I believe every body wonders, that I am able to officiate for myself. I am so weak, that I can hardly walk to the end of my parish, though a small one; and so tender, that I dare not visit my poor neighbours, for fear of catching cold in their bleak houses; yet I am enabled on the Lord's day to catechize, and expound to my children in the morning, and to preach in the afternoon. And every Wednesday evening, hay-time and harvest only excepted, I read prayers, and give them a lecture-sermon in Weston church.

This is the Lord's doing, or, as your favourite book expresses it, this is owing to "the good hand of my God upon me." Join with me, my dear friend, in adoring his grace, and pray, that if my life is spared, my capacity for his service may be prolonged; that, if it be his blessed will, the day which puts an end to the one may put a period to the other.

I thank you for your news from the west. I assure you it is highly pleasing to hear, especially concerning the prosperity of my old acquaintance. I often think of them, and with deep regret for my unprofitableness among them. Blessed be God for ever and ever, that both they and I may have a better righteousness than our own. May we all grow in grace, and ere long meet in glory!

You need not doubt but it is a pleasure to my heart to remember, in my best moments, that valuable and valued friend, with whom I have frequently taken sweet counsel on earth, and with whom I shall quickly be admitted into the heaven of heavens; there to behold the glory, the inconceivable and eternal glory of him who loved us both, and has washed us from our sins in his own blood.

God has been pleased to pity the poor youth for whose relief the visitation-sermon I preached at Northampton was printed. Through his good Providence, an edition of two thousand is disposed of; besides a supernumerary provision of two hundred, destined to the use of my parishes. Nay, the manager for the distressed object is venturing upon another edition. See, dear sir, if God will bless, who can blast? If he will further, what can obstruct? A feather, a straw, if he pleases to command, shall be a polished shaft in his quiver. Trust not therefore in eloquence or argument, in depth of thought or beauty of style, both which are confessedly wanting in the present case; but "trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

I am surprised that any attendant on the —— of —— should inquire after my sermon, unless it was

to criticize, censure, and expose; because there was really given too much occasion, both to his —— and all his friends, to resent what some time ago I seemed to have done. In the midst of the controversy between the —— and ——, there was put into the —— Journal a paragraph from a letter of mine, consisting of a pretty high encomium on Mr ——. As though I should, unchallenged and unprovoked, step forth to confront your ——; or should think to bear down a —— objections by my single authority. This was also inserted in the most offensive manner; not as an extract from a private epistle, without the consent or knowledge of the writer, but introduced as my own act, and subscribed with my own name.

I have found no reason to retract one jot or tittle of what was said. And God forbid that I should be ashamed of that incomparable minister of Jesus Christ; than whom I know no man on earth who has more of the amiable and heavenly spirit of Christ. Nor do I remember to have met with, in all my reading, a person, since the days of miracle and inspiration, so eminently zealous, or so extensively useful. Yet to obtrude his character on the public, at such a time, and with such circumstances, had such an air of officiousness, self-conceit, and arrogance, as must necessarily disgust others, and is what I would absolutely disavow.

This, I afterwards learned, was done by a well-meaning and most pious man; but, in this particular, very injudicious. It is much to be desired that religious persons may have wisdom with their zeal; eyes in their wings, that, as far as is consistent with the exercise of integrity, and the discharge of duty, we may give no offence, neither to the Jew nor to the Greek, nor to the church of God.

Accept my sincerest thanks for your promoting the spread of my sermon; and continue your prayers for its enfeebled author, that if the most high God vouchsafes to employ him in any other work for the

honour of his dear Son, he may be enabled to find out acceptable words, and that which is written may be words of truth. My affectionate compliments wait upon Mrs ——. May you and yours dwell under the defence of the Most High, and abide under the shadow of the Almighty! I am, dear sir, most cordially and inviolably yours, &c.

LETTER CXVI.

Weston, May 5. 1754.

DEAR SIR,—SOME time ago, Mr Moses Browne was so kind as to transmit to me three of your letters, which gave me both pain and pleasure. Pain, to think how I had neglected to cultivate so valuable a correspondent; pleasure and improvement from the perusal of your truly judicious remarks on Mr Kennicott's performance, and Mr Goodby's attempt. The latter, I am afraid, is not sensible of the great importance, and no small difficulty, of writing a proper comment on the whole Bible. To explain and illustrate, with any tolerable justice, a book so very sublime, so vastly comprehensive, surely should be the work, not of a few months or years, but of his whole life, were his abilities ever so distinguished. I should be extremely sorry to see that glorious gift of heaven come abroad into the world, with such a collection of remarks as might be more likely to depreciate than minister to its universal acceptance.

You are pleased to mention my intended work, and to offer your kind assistance; an offer which, I assure you, I highly value: I desire nothing so much as to have the same impartiality of criticism exercised upon my manuscript, as you have bestowed upon the aforementioned writings. When my piece has been enriched by your corrections, and if it receives your imprimatur, it shall go to the press without delay, as there is a likelihood of a large demand for the work both at home and abroad. This consideration makes me timorous and diffident, especially as

my incessant infirmities and unconquerable languors render me sadly unfit for the support of so weighty and so grand a cause. If it was not for such a declaration in the word of truth and life as this, "Not by might, nor by strength, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord," I should totally despair of any success. Excuse, dear sir, this hasty scribble; strengthen the feeblest of all hands engaged in the divine Jesus's service; and pity a man whose head aches while he writes to you, and heart almost fails when he writes for the public; but is, amidst all his weaknesses, your very sincere and much obliged friend, &c.

LETTER CXVII.

Weston-Favell, May 20. 1754.

My dear Friend,—Your letter was good news from a far country, and made doubly welcome by a long preceding silence, and by the valuable hand that brought it.

Mr —— gave me his company one afternoon. We talked of Christ Jesus and his beloved minister at ——. O that our conversation may be edifying, and build us mutually up in our most holy faith! He was so obliging as to présent me with the picture of the late worthy Doctor. I hope, when I view it, I shall be reminded of the inscription of Sennacherib's statue; Ες εμε τις οραων ευσεβης εστω:* or rather, that it will address me with the apostle's admonition, "Be ye not slothful, but followers of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises."

Mr —— has likewise transmitted to me seven of your sermons, six on common, one on superfine paper. For the latter I sincerely thank you; for the former, I desire you will give me leave to pay you. I propose to gratify and oblige my friends with them; and it seems utterly unreasonable that I should be generous at your expense. I admire

* Whoever looks upon me, let him worship God.

and applaud your noble reliance on God and his providence; and were you a single man, I would not offer to interpose a prudential hint. But perhaps the other amiable parts of yourself may not have the same steady and triumphant faith. For their sakes, therefore, it may be advisable to take the ant for a pattern, and lay up something against a rainy day.

I heartily wish that good Providence on which you depend, may spread your piece and prosper it in the world. Sure you should suffer it to be advertised in some of the principal newspapers. I dare say you desire, you covet, you are ambitious to do good, and be extensively useful. As this then is a commodious open door, let not my friend's modesty or self-diffidence shut it.

I have no desire to reconcile you, dear sir, to systems, human systems, of religion; I know other devout and godly persons that dislike them. They have been serviceable to my soul; and whenever I read them, I think they are blessed to my improvement and comfort; only let us all concur in prizing the blessed book of God. May we enter into its treasures more and more, and shed abroad the sweet savour of its doctrine in every place! Above all, my dear Mr ——, may we never cease to testify of him who is the *Alpha* and *Omega* of the Scripture, and the soul and centre of the whole Christian religion; who is, by infinite degrees, the most grand and amiable representative of the eternal Godhead to the church; and the only source of pardon and acceptance, of wisdom and goodness, of grace and glory to the believer.

I rejoice to find, that you take in good part my very free remarks, and very feeble attempts to criticize. Indeed, I did not doubt but you would. I send two or three manuscripts, and beg of you to exercise the same frankness of admonition, and the same impartiality of censure upon them. My bookseller tells me it cannot be comprised in less than

three volumes. I have always had an aversion to so diffusive a work. Many will not have ability to purchase them; many not have leisure to read them; and to some, I fear, the very sight of three volumes would be like loads of meat to a sickly or squeamish stomach. Yet I cannot contract the work, and reduce it to the size of two, without omitting those parts which are intended to entertain the reader, keep him in good humour, and allure or bribe him to go on. What would you advise?

I have not seen Lord ——'s works. And since their character is so forbidding, their tendency so hurtful, I shall not attempt to see them. I do not question but the great Physician will provide an antidote for this poison, and the almighty Head of the church will enable his disciples to tread on such serpents.

I am this day a prisoner in my chamber, and write in much pain. Blessed be God for that world where all tears will be wiped away from our eyes, and "there will be no more pain." And blessed be God for a Saviour, who is the way to those happy mansions, and the door of admission into them. O that every thing may lead my dear friend and me more and more to Christ. In him alone, peace, and rest, and true joy, are to be found.

I send Letters viii. ix. x. xi. and Dial. xv. xvii. Do, my dear sir, improve, polish, and enrich them. And if God Almighty blesses them, if our adored Redeemer vouchsafes to work by them, I will thank you not only in these regions of sin and mortality, but when I meet you before the throne of the Lamb, and amidst the angels of light. Till then, may the Father of mercies keep you as the apple of his eye, and make you a polished arrow in his quiver. Believe me to be, dear sir, your sincere, obliged, and affectionate brother in Christ, &c.

LETTER CXVIII.

Weston, May 30. 1754.

DEAR SIR,—YESTERDAY I received your valuable letter. I thank you for the comfortable prayer; it exactly suits my circumstances. May I be enabled to breathe it from my very soul in faith, and may it enter into the ears of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Pray make no apology for the length of your letter. Whenever you favour me with an epistle, the more you suffer your pen to enlarge, the more you will oblige and improve your correspondent. I wish you success in finishing your chronological and historical treatise, and shall be much pleased to peruse it.

Your solution of the difficulty in Acts vii. is very ingenious, and subserves the purposes of piety. But do you think the patriarchs would inter the Sichemites in a burying place that belonged to a stranger; and not rather deposit them in their family vaults, or the sepulchres where their ancestors lay? I should be glad to see the sequel of your dissertation concerning the fallen angels. I send herewith four of my Dialogues, which I beg of you to examine with a kind severity. I do assure you I can bear to receive censure from a friend, and will kiss the lips that administer it, especially when it is intended to preserve my attempts to further the glorious gospel from the contempt of the public. I will, ere long, send you in a frank a general view of my plan, which in the execution is become too prolix, and cannot be comprehended in less than three volumes of the same size with the Meditations, unless some judicious friend will help me to curtail and abridge. I am very unwilling to publish a work consisting of three volumes: I apprehend this will obstruct the sale not a little. Be so kind as to serve my essays as you have treated Mr Goodby's expository notes; take the pruning-knife, and freely lop off the luxuriant

parts. Your notes on Taylor of Norwich I return with thankful acknowledgments; you will see what use I have made of them. I had penned more animadversions upon that piece; but, upon a review, I found they would swell the work too much. I have a note, Dial. iv. page 4. that is directly to the point; would you advise me to retain it? I had expunged it. I have directed the printer to restore it, but *hesitantur hoc.* You will receive half a dozen of a little collection of scripture promises,* which I lately printed in two small bits of paper, chiefly for the poor, to be pasted, one at the beginning, and the other at the end of their Bibles, or indeed of any pious book. Perhaps you may know some to whom such a present, though minute, may be welcome. As soon as you return these manuscripts, if I have your approbation, I purpose to employ the press. In the mean time, it shall be my prayer to God, that he may give you a right judgment in all things. Your most affectionate, &c.

LETTER CXIX.

June 12. 1754.

My dear Friend,—Do you wonder why I have not acknowledged the receipt of your last? Indeed it deserved a most speedy and a most grateful acknowledgment; but I was unwilling to interrupt your thoughts with fresh inquiries. Your thoughts, I hope, have been employed in discovering the Rev. Dr ———'s mistakes, and in teaching him what that means which our Lord gave as the commission to his ministers, "Preach the gospel."

I received your present from Mr ——; but I shall not want any memorial of your friendship, so long as you will give me leave to consult you about difficult passages in Scripture; and these memorials, I assure you, will not be transient: I shall carefully preserve

* This collection is inserted Vol. V. under the title of *Promises to be pasted at the beginning and end of a Bible.*

them; and when their number and size is a little more increased, shall form them into a volume, which will be more valuable to me than any book in my study.

The anecdotes of your own life are very welcome; if you could add others, they would be still more pleasing. As you are well acquainted with ancient history, have you met with any account of the four monarchies; concise, taking in only the most memorable and striking facts; and still more particularly calculated to explain the prophecies of Scripture, and demonstrate their exact accomplishments? This, with a succinct detail of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jews, would, I think, be a very pretty historical furniture for young minds.

I think all your criticisms please and improve me, that only excepted which relates to 1 Cor. ix. 24. While I was writing this, Mr P——, the bearer, came in; for which reason you will give me leave, for the sake of enjoying his company, to conclude: only let me add, that I purpose, if I live till the beginning of next week, to finish what I intended to say in a letter by the post; which very probably may anticipate what now comes from, dear sir, yours, &c.

LETTER CXX.

DEAR SIR,—I THINK one guinea is full enough for giving away to a person whose character we are ignorant of. There are too many *(dolet dictum!)* to whom an alms in the way of money is only an administration of fuel to their lusts. Not that I presume to fix such a charge upon the present petitioner; yet this conviction makes me cautious, where I have no assurance of the person's sobriety. Had it not been for his father's worth, I should have almost thought it my duty to have shut my hand, till I received some more satisfactory recommenda-

tion. We are stewards of our Master's goods; and discretion is requisite in the discharge of such an office, as well as fidelity.

I fancy, my dear friend, you did not take notice of an unbecoming expression which dropt from your lips while I sat at your table. You was a little chagrined at the carelessness of your servant, and said to him with some warmth, "What, in the name of God, do you mean?" Such expressions from your lips will be much observed, and long remembered. I need say no more; you yourself will perceive, by a moment's reflection, how faulty they are in themselves, and how pernicious they may be to others. May the good Lord pardon and deliver you from evil! and may both of us more frequently meditate on this important text, "Set a watch before our mouths, and keep the door of our lips!" Ever yours, &c.

LETTER CXXI.

June 14. 1754.

My dear Friend,—Before this can reach your hands, you will, in all probability, have seen Mr P——. He is really an ingenious gentleman, has a lively apprehension, a penetrating judgment, as well as a large share of reading. May the almighty Spirit vouchsafe to sanctify those endowments; and make our interviews, not an occasion of ambitiously displaying our talents, but of building up one another in our most holy faith! I can hardly agree to my friend's proposal for altering the translation of 1 Cor. ix. 24. May it not be an incitement to the utmost diligence? *q. d.* The contenders know, that though many run, yet one alone can receive the prize; therefore they exert all their strength and all their speed, each hoping, and each striving, to be that distinguished happy one: So likewise do ye.—Or may it not be an encouragement, drawn from the prospect of general success?

q. d. How much greater reason have you to run the Christian race, since not one only, but all may receive the prize of your high calling! Of these interpretations, the former seems most suitable to the tenor of the apostle's discourse. What do you apprehend to be the precise sense of that expression, ἐστε ἐν αὐτῷ πεπληρωμένοι, Col. ii. 10. Is our translation exact? Or should it be rendered, "ye are filled with him, filled by him?" filled with wisdom, holiness, &c. I was reading Psalm civ. and a doubt arose concerning the meaning of those expressions, "He layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: He maketh the clouds his chariot?" Does the Psalmist intend to signify the same thing by waters and clouds? Or by waters does he mean somewhat different from the fluid which composes the clouds? Houbigant finds fault with our translation of *Dure et incredibiliter Arias, contignavit aquis;* he would correct it according to his usual way, by altering the original, *Nos legimus cooperiens: Sic legunt, præter Syrum, omnes in Polyglottis.* What think you of verse 19. *going down?* Is that all which the sun knows or observes? Would not that be a very imperfect discharge of his office? May not the original phrase denote his going, his circuit, his whole journey? Comprehending, not only his setting, but his rising, his meridian, and all his stages; together with his passage from one tropic to another, and his distribution, not only of day, but of seasons also, through the various regions of the globe? Is this word *seasons* rightly translated? By seasons we generally mean the four grand distributions of the year, into spring and summer, autumn and winter. But these, you know, are neither occasioned by the influences, nor regulated by the appearances of the moon. I could be glad to see, from your critical pen, a correct translation of this fine psalm; together with such remarks as may explain what is difficult, and illustrate what is beautiful. Next Saturday I hope to send your manuscript. In the mean time, let me promise myself a

remembrance in your prayers, and expect the favour of a letter, which will be thankfully received, and highly valued by, dear sir, affectionately yours, &c.

LETTER CXXII.

Weston, June 21. 1754.

DEAR SIR,—BEFORE this arrives, I hope my parcel transmitted according to your direction will have reached your hands; and my Dialogues will have receiyed the free correction and the friendly improvements of your pen.

As, through my many and repeated infirmities, I had long discontinued and have often intermitted my intended work, I am informed from London, that the abettors of the Socinian scheme have been pleased to triumph in my disappointment; imagining that, through fear or inability, I had laid aside my design; and insinuating, that I had changed my principles, or was conscious of the weakness of my cause. From these gentlemen, if my essay should appear in public, it may expect a severe examination, and probably a violent attack. I hope your friendship will anticipate their inveteracy; and remove those blemishes which might give them a handle for censure, or a ground for insult. My prayer for my kind corrector is, that the Lord Jesus Christ, whose sacred honour and precious interest are concerned, would give him "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and of might." Is there not a peculiar force and beauty in this last metaphor? How would you develop and set it forth to common view? I have just had occasion to consider that remarkable expression in Psalm xv.; methinks the Bible translation does not recommend itself to my judgment: I am better satisfied, and more edified with the version used by our Liturgy; only it seems not to have preserved the strength of the original. However, I will say no more upon this point; because, if I live to send another packet of proba-

tionary manuscripts, you will see my sentiments on this particular incorporated with the work.

What is your opinion as to publishing three volumes? Mr Moses Browne and another friend pronounce in the affirmative; though I am much afraid that this circumstance will clog the sale. There are several pieces that are a kind of excursion from the principal subject, calculated to relieve and entertain the reader, yet not without administering some spiritual benefit. A whole dialogue upon the wonders of wisdom, power, and goodness, displayed in the contrivance and formation of the human body. Two or three letters, pointing out the traces of the same grand and amiable attributes in the constitution of the earth, the air, and the ocean. These I am afraid to lop off, lest it should be like wiping the bloom from the plum, or taking the gold from the gingerbread. To you I say gingerbread, though I would not say so to the public; for I really think the taste of the present age is somewhat like the humour of children: Their milk must be sugared, their wine spiced, and their necessary food garnished with flowers, and enriched with sweetmeats. In my next I hope to lay before you a summary view of my whole design. I forget whether I enclosed in my last, one of the little collection of Scripture Promises which I caused lately to be printed, for the benefit and comfort of my people. I would have them pasted into their Bibles; and may the God of all grace command them to be mixed with faith, and ingrafted into their hearts. If I have already desired your acceptance of one, these I now send may be for your friends. I fancy a short but lively discourse upon each of the eight heads, and the texts selected, might, after they have been committed to the memories of the people, be acceptable, and what the apostle calls "a word in season." "Angry at the length of your letters!" No, dear sir! They are, as Tully said of Demosthenes's orations, "The longer the more valuable." I am your obliged friend, &c.

LETTER CXXIII.

My dear Friend,—Thank you for sending the cuts designed for the Bible. All my hope with regard to them is, that they may remind some beholders of the transcendent excellency of the sacred writings. I propose, by the next post, to write to Mr ——. I would very willingly present him with my picture, as you desire it; but I really think my picture, if much better done, is not worth a frame. And, I own, I do not much like giving away what savours more of vanity than benevolence.

Cannot you get a little leisure to peruse part of my intended work? I have, for a month or six weeks, been prosecuting it in earnest. I have sent four of the Dialogues transcribed by my amanuensis. Do steal a little time from the multiplicity of your medical engagements to examine them; retrench, where I am redundant; clear up, where I am obscure; polish what is uncouth. I hope Mr —— will do me the same favour; and may the God of wisdom give both my friends and me a right judgment in all things. I have seen Mr ——'s answer. God be praised that I had no occasion for controversy. I have not seen Mr Moses Browne this many a day. The last time he was with me he talked about reprinting his Sunday Thoughts, and adding a third part, which he had finished, and which completes his scheme. I would have the three parts printed in a neat pocket volume. Have you read his Poem on the Universe? I think it is the most pleasing, and, indeed, the best thing he ever wrote. I hope the God of heaven will smile upon his endeavours, and animate us all to labour in his dear Son's cause, and prosper the labours which he himself excites. And if God will prosper, who shall obstruct? "If he will work, who can let it?" My dear friend, let our eyes be ever looking unto the hills from whence cometh our help; to that omnipotent Being who stretched

out the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; to that all-gracious Being who spared not (unparalleled, stupendous goodness!) spared not his own Son, but freely gave him up for us both. O that we may dearly love him; firmly trust in him; and desire nothing so much as to know him now by faith, and after this life have the fruition of his glorious Godhead!—To his everlasting compassions I commit my friend; and am inviolably yours, &c.

LETTER CXXIV.

Weston, July 8. 1754.

DEAR SIR,—YOUR favour of June 28. is now before me, and demands my sincerest thanks; and mine, I assure you, are of the sincerest kind. I am sensible it is not in every one's power to do such acts of kindness; and if Providence vouchsafes to smile upon my essay, they will be of the most lasting, the most extensive, and the most important nature. If I live till next Saturday, I propose to transmit to you six more of the Dialogues, which will open a new field for your friendly hand to weed, cultivate, and improve. Exercise the same benevolent severity upon them, and continue to retrench, as well as to reform.

I am obliged for your criticisms; and oh! that I may be imboldened by the extract from your intended work. No man, I believe, stands in more need of such encouragements than myself. Timorous by nature, and made abundantly more so by a long series of unintermitted languors, and a very debilitated constitution, for which reason, I promise myself, you will commend the writer and his attempt to that great Jehovah in whom is everlasting strength; and for your kind assistance I shall think myself bound to praise his adorable Majesty, and to pray that he would "fill you with all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."

I will, since I have the concurrence of your judgment, and I hope the guidance of our Lord Jesus Christ, determine upon three volumes. How long do you apprehend it will be before your chronological and historical piece will be finished? I hope it will abound with explanations of Scripture, and be rich with short, but striking improvements. May you continually enjoy that unction from the Holy One which teacheth all things! And, oh! that its precious influences may descend upon, dear sir, your much obliged and truly affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER CXXV.

July 13. 1754.

DEAR SIR,—I HOPE my last letter, wherein I apprized you of a parcel to be transmitted to you, is in your hand. Here are six Dialogues. May the everlasting and wonderful Counsellor enable you to search them as with a candle, and make them such as he will condescend to bless! I have dropped several objections and answers; yet I fear too many are still retained. A multiplicity of objects dissipates the attention either of the eye or the mind. Are what the painters call the two unities preserved? one principal action and one grand point of view, in each piece? Does Theron speak enough; or with such weight, and such a spice of the *sal Atticus*, as might suit his character? Here and there a touch of wit or genteel satire in him, I think, would be graceful, especially in the first part, before he is brought to a conviction of his guilt. I hope you will not only find out all the faults, but that you will point this arrow, and trim its feathers; and may the arm of the Most High launch it, that it may be the arrow of the Lord's salvation. I am, dear sir, affectionately and gratefully yours, &c.

LETTER CXXVI.

Weston-Favell, Aug. 27. 1754.

DEAR SIR,—I HAVE read part of your chronological manuscript,* and I bless God for giving you such a penetrating and comprehensive mind. To confess the truth, it is beyond my power to follow, even in those researches where you have surmounted the difficulties and cleared the way; but there are many things which I understand, and with which I am delighted; insomuch that, if you do not intend to publish it, I should very much desire a copy of it. But what should hinder the publication? Why should not the learned world be improved by what is profound, and the whole world be edified by what is easy? I have no acquaintance in this neighbourhood who is versed in chronological inquiries, and capable of judging of your computations and arguments; otherwise I would obtain for you his opinion. Mr Moses Browne (author of the Sunday Thoughts) will gladly peruse it. Will you excuse me though I add no more? A gentleman waits for me below, to transact an affair of which I understand but very little; he is come to take my parsonage-grounds, in order to plough them for woad, an herb much used by the dyers. May prosperity attend his plough; but, above all, may it attend yours and mine, which would open the ground for the seed of the everlasting gospel. I am loath to miss a post, loath to defer my thanks for your last very valuable favour, otherwise you would not be put off with such a hasty scrap from, dear sir, your most obliged and affectionate, &c.

* The manuscript which Mr Hervey here takes notice of is called, "A short Chronicle of the most remarkable events from the beginning of the world to the Building of Solomon's temple."

LETTER CXXVII.

October 2.

SIR,—I HAVE perused the greatest part of Dr Hodge's Elihu. It is wrote, I think, in a masculine and noble style; is animated with a lively spirit of piety; and urges, with a becoming zeal, some of the grand peculiarities of the gospel. I hope it will prove a blessing to both the universities; and be a means of testifying, to both those learned bodies, the truth as it is in Jesus. Dear Mr —— has been gone from us almost a fortnight. What a burning and a shining light is he! Burning with ministerial zeal, and shining in all holy conversation. I hope our dear friend ——'s sermon was attended with a blessing; and may the blessing be greatly increased by the publication! May the drop become a river, and the river become a sea!—I was yesterday with five or six young students, and this day with three ingenious gentlemen of the laity, two of whom are acquainted with the Hebrew. Our conversation turned wholly upon that superexcellent and delightful subject, "the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent." 'Oh, may that almighty Being, who has every human heart in his hand, sanctify our discourse to our eternal advantage! And let us, my dear friend, talk for him, write for him, and live for him, who "died for our sins, and is risen again for our justification." May his Spirit be your continual guide, and his favour your everlasting portion! Ever yours, while, &c.

LETTER CXXVIII.

DEAR SIR,—THE gentleman who versified part of my Meditations is Mr Newcomb of Hackney. I thought it exceedingly well executed; much superior to his ode on the final dissolution of the world, which he has since published.

As to Bishop Fowler's Design of Christianity, he has, as far as I have read, good sense, clear language, and sometimes fine striking sentiments. But I most cordially embrace the proposition, viz. "That faith justifieth only as it apprehendeth the merits and righteousness of Jesus Christ," which he most peremptorily condemns. Please to cast your eye to the fifth line of the next paragraph—(the Bishop's words are, "Imputation of Christ's righteousness consists in dealing with sincerely righteous persons as if they were perfectly so, for the sake of Jesus Christ;)—and compare his "sincerely righteous persons" with St Paul's declaration, Rom. iv. 5. that Christ justifieth the ungodly. When you have perused and considered Bishop's Fowler's treatise thoroughly, please to let me have it again; especially as you and Mr H—r apprehend he has given better directions for the attainment of true holiness than Mr Marshall. Thanks for young Mr C—'s sermon. He is a correct writer, but wants the main thing. "Christ is all in all." He either forgets, or understands those words in a manner very different from my apprehension. Mr G—t has much good sense, but to me his sermon reads flat: in his discourse, likewise, I wished to have seen more of our Immanuel's glory. I am, &c.

LETTER CXXIX.

Weston, Oct. 20. 1754.

DEAR SIR,—I RECEIVED the parcel safe, and desire to bless God's providence for not suffering the manuscripts to be lost in their passage, as they had like to have been; and to thank my kind friend for his judicious remarks. Herein is enclosed Dialogue xvi. I durst not venture to commit this to the press without submitting it to your correction. Dear sir, examine it with a critical severity; and may he, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, enable you to discern and rectify what is amiss. It is, as you will

easily perceive, a subject of the last importance. O that, in handling it, I might be "a workman that need not be ashamed." Pardon my scraps of answers, to your large and valuable letters. I hardly know how to get a moment's leisure, so very intent am I now on the publication of my book. I have not been able, for want of time, to read over this transcript: I hope the copier has not made any great mistakes. Be so good, dear sir, as to favour me with your remarks on this manuscript as soon as you possibly can: you need not return it, only send me your remarks. But you will please to preserve this, for fear of an accident happening to the other copy.—I am, dear sir, yours most affectionately, &c.

LETTER CXXX.

Thursday, noon.

My dear Friend,—I am glad Dr C—— got time, and took the trouble of overlooking the manuscripts. He has the judgment of a critic, and the freedom of a friend. Moses Browne is persuaded by the bookseller to print his poem on the Universe, and his Sunday Thoughts, in one volume, and intends to entitle it, The Works and Rest of Creation; with the addition of some more particular explicatory and subordinate title. I objected to this general title; made a query, whether it was strictly proper? or, if proper, whether sufficiently significant? Instead of it, I proposed, The Works of Creation, and Rest of the Sabbath.

Dr Gill shall tell you my sentiments, in relation to Wesley, on the perseverance of the saints. Both their pamphlets on this subject I send you. Whether his replies and interpretations in the first part are sound and satisfactory, judge you; the considerations suggested in the latter part, I think, are full of weight, rich with consolation, and worthy of a place in our memories and in our heart. May our own

meditation fix them in the one, and the Spirit of our God implant them in the other!

I am entirely of your opinion with regard to Staynoe on Salvation by Jesus Christ; generally very prolix, and somewhat tiresome to the reader; yet his style is good, nervous, and beautiful. Prolixity, I find, is an epidemical fault among writers; the censure I pass on him rebounds on myself: save me from this misconduct, by lopping off my redundancies. I have not looked into Staynoe for a great while; when I revise him again, you shall have my sentiments concerning his doctrine; which, though excellent in the main, is not, I apprehend, perfectly consistent, nor evangelical throughout. I have seen Mr ——'s verses on Dr ——'s character; I am apprehensive (*inter nos*) that it will rather depreciate than exalt the Rev. Doctor's credit among readers of a gospel spirit. There are indeed the *sales Attici*, but where are the *sales evangelici?* What says our lively friend ——? I think he is the Caleb of our fraternity. Caleb signifies all heart. His name and nature correspond. Did he not warm you with his zeal? Oh that we may glow with love to Him, who bled for love of us! I have received a letter from our dear friend on the American continent. He mentions you in particular, and your late guest. Love, cordial love he transmits to you both. We believe him, when he makes a profession of kindness; and why are we so backward to believe the more repeated, more solemn, and infinitely more faithful assurances, which the Scripture gives us of our Redeemer's love? Let us blush and be confounded for our unbelief; and may the Lord of all power and grace help our unbelief!—Ever yours, &c.

P. S.—Certainly our friend judges right in not acting as a justice of peace, unless he would submit to the fatigue of acquainting himself with our national laws: A study which is, if I rightly judge; which, I am sure, would be to my taste of all others the most jejune and irksome. Not so the Scriptures!

God has, in tender indulgence to our disposition, strewed them with flowers, dignified them with wonders; enriched them with all that may delight the man of genius, and make the man of God perfect. May we, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word; and grow, grow thereby in knowledge, grow in faith, grow in love, in holiness, in every amiable and happy accomplishment. Do not you practise that excellent rule, of selecting for meditation each day a text of Scripture? As to publishing the first volume of Theron and Aspasio before the others are ready, I really know not how to act. May the God of unerring wisdom vouchsafe to direct, for his dear Son our glorious Intercessor's sake!

LETTER CXXXI.

Weston, Aug. 12. 1754.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—I RECEIVED your favour from Islington, and acknowledge myself indebted to you for a preceding one from Scotland. I am, both to you and to other of my worthy correspondents, quite an insolvent; yet trust, my many infirmities, in concurrence with your candour, will plead my excuse.

I called myself an insolvent; but I shall, ere long, make one public effort to pay from the press all my debts of an epistolary nature: the payment, I confess, will not be in the very same specie, but it will bear the same image and superscription, not Cæsar's but Christ's. This will recommend it to my correspondents, and not only bespeak their kind acceptance of it, but engage their cordial prayers in its behalf. Do, my dear sir, remember my poor enterprise, when you call upon him who is omnipotent; he can bid the wounded come against the fortress, and the lame take the prey. Unless he succour, unless he support, what can impotence itself expect, but to miscarry in the attempt, and be a laughing-stock

to the enemy? But I read, and this encourages me, "It is not by might, nor by strength, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."

I did not know, till yours informed me, that Mr —— was gone to his long, and I trust to his happy home. O that we who survive may have our affections fixed there, where our God and Saviour resides, whither our friends and relations are removed!

I wish you and your spouse much joy in each other, but much more in Christ Jesus. As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so may the Lord your God rejoice over you both. Let me beg of you to present my affectionate salutations to good Mr G——. Assure him, that my silence did not proceed from any indifference to his friendship, or disesteem for his work; but I was much indisposed. I had nothing to communicate, and to have written in such circumstances, would been burdensome to me, and unserviceable to him. My respectful compliments attend Mrs O——, your spouse, and yourself; and I entreat your united prayers for, dear sir, your sincere friend and brother in Christ, &c.

P. S.—The enclosed collection of scriptural promises, are a little present which I make to my people. They are intended to be pasted, one at the beginning, the other at the end, of religious books. Perhaps some of your friends may not disdain this spiritual nosegay, because, though little, it is culled from the garden of God.

LETTER CXXXII.

Wednesday morning.

Dear Sir,—I was lately favoured at Weston with a visit from the Reverend Mr Walker of Truro, who is indeed a most excellent man, much of a gentleman, and seems well to deserve the character he bears: there is something in him very engaging, yet very venerable. During our conversation, I felt a kind of reverential awe on my mind, blended with

more than fraternal affection. How old is he? By his looks he appears to be past forty. What a reproach is it to our men in power, nay, to the nation itself, that so valuable a person should at this time of life be no more than a country curate? But he, good man! disregards the things of this world. That time which too many of his brethren spend, to the disgrace of their function, in worldly compliances, and hunting after church preferments, he employs as a faithful labourer in the vineyard of Christ; and pays all due obedience to the apostle's important injunction, "Redeem time!" How would some of the primitive bishops have sought after a man of his exemplary piety, and have given him every mark of their real esteem! *Sed tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis.*

I am much pleased with the account of the religious society at Truro, of which Mr Walker is the founder and present director. It is an admirable plan! I would have endeavoured (had my health permitted my attendance) to have formed one of the same kind at Northampton. I heartily wish so useful an institution was more known, and well established in all the principal towns in this kingdom; as I am persuaded such a society must be productive of great good, and in some degree revive the drooping interest of Christianity, wherever it was prudently managed. We had in this neighbourhood a religious assembly, of which I myself was a member;* but no one could be admitted who did not understand Greek, as the chief design of that meeting was to improve each other in scriptural knowledge, and consequently could be of little use comparatively with Mr Walker's plan.†

I have lately read Mr. Warton's edition of Virgil, and much approve the printing the Latin on one side, and his poetical translation on the other: he is a

* The Rules and Orders of the Assembly here mentioned, are inserted in Vol. V.

† For the Rules and Orders of the Truro Society, see Vol. V.

clever man; but I think he might have enriched his notes with many more observations on the beauties and masterly strokes of the poet. I would not for my own part give a straw for the most accurate disputations upon a chronological or geographical nicety; but I would applaud and thank the critic who will assist me to see the art and address, to feel the force and fire, and to enter into the spirit and delicacy of such an author as Virgil. I am, dear sir, with great respect, your obliged and very humble servant, &c.

LETTER CXXXIII.

Saturday morning.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I HAVE read over, again and again, the corrected copy of your little tract which you intend for the next edition, and have examined it with my best attention: not able to make any amendment that is considerable, I have only suggested some slight alterations. Elegance you do not covet in such a composition; plain and neat is the proper array for such an address.

I am surprised to read the letter which the popular gentleman from Durham writes against your book. Never fear, my friend; our writings, as well as our lives, are in the hand of God Almighty: if he will spread, what shall obstruct them? if he will work by them, who shall disannul his design? O may we cry to him, cleave to him, and live by faith on him! for "not by might, nor by power," not by eloquence of composition, nor by interest of patrons, "but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."

Pray, take a little pains with my Theron and Aspasio; you can scarcely imagine what inquiries are made after it, and what a demand there is for it, even before publication. It makes me rejoice with trembling. All-wise, all-gracious Jesus, be jealous for thine honour! Let me not, O let me not cloud its brightness, or obstruct its progress, by any injudicious touches of my pen.—I now feel the loss of

our valuable friend Dr Doddridge, to whose judgment I ever paid the highest deference; but since he is gone, and we can have no more of his personal counsels, let us redouble our attention to his writings.

I expect you will tell me my manuscript is very prolix; but I designedly made it so, that my friends might judge what is proper to be omitted. It is easier, you know, to expunge than to compose: I wish they would with a leaden pencil enclose in a parenthesis what they would have dropt; I hope to retrench one-fourth of the copy. May the God of wisdom direct, and the God of mercy prosper, all our undertakings! I am yours very sincerely, &c.

LETTER CXXXIV.

Saturday morning.

THANKS to my dear friend for the entertainment he has given me, by Hanway's account of Nadir Shah;* an illustrious villain indeed! he spread firebrands, arrows, and death. May we be conformed to his image, who went about doing good!

If you have Voltaire's Life of Louis XIV., be pleased to give me the perusal of it: I fancy, his reign in France was somewhat like the Augustine age in Rome. Periods of politeness both! but what are those to heaven? the world where DWELLETH righteousness; consummate righteousness and everlasting happiness? Do you not long, more and more, for those courts of the living God? Do you not love him more and more, who (after he had overcome the sharpness of death) opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers?

Warburton, I hear, has published two volumes of sermons, octavo; in which, it seems, he has decried experimental religion, disregarded the peculiarities of the gospel, and treated the operations of the Spirit as mere enthusiasm. If this be the effect of his great

* See Hanway's Travels, vol. ii. page 255.

learning, then, good Lord, deliver us all, say I, from such an attainment. If you either have, or can borrow them, just let me peep on them. Do not buy them to gratify me; I can relish nothing but what is evangelical.

Your friend's Dissertations were put into my hands; very pure diction, but that is all—all to me at least. There was the bone, but the marrow was gone; Jesus Christ, my portion and yours, was forgot. How different his strain from St Paul's resolution, "I am determined to know nothing but Christ Jesus, and him crucified," which happened to be the subject of my exhortation to my family last night. Lord, reveal thy adorable Son, the all-sufficient Saviour, in our hearts; and the more others neglect him, so much the more let us, my dear friend, be zealous to honour him.

I have looked into the manuscript you sent me: there seem to be many lively and spirited sentiments in it, but surely it is defective in the main point. St Paul, I am apt to think, upon a perusal of the treatise, would say, the author has good sense, may be no bad moralist, but being "ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish his own righteousness, he has not submitted to the righteousness of God," Rom. x. 3. Lord, give us an understanding, that we may know him that is true! Then we shall see Christ Jesus, the God-man, to be, in the grand affair of salvation, like the meridian sun; and all other things like the stars at noon-day.

Did you ever read Mr Whalley's Remarks upon Shakspeare? If you have not, I will send you the pamphlet. They are very ingenious, and well deserve the notice of the public; particularly of yours, who are such an admirer of Shakspeare.

When you can spare Francis's translation of Demosthenes, (I suppose it is the same Francis who translated Horace), favour me with a sight of it. A sight of this will content me; but God's word, that inestimable book, which shews me the way of salva-

tion, I would cleave to, I would dwell upon. And would not you, my dear friend, do so too? Εν τουτοις ισθι.

My text on Wednesday evening will be a complete description of a Christian; viz. "We are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh," Phil. iii. 3. A fine subject for your meditation: Why should I not add for your conversation also? Ever yours.

LETTER CXXXV.

DEAR SIR,—I HERE send you part of my manuscript copy of Theron and Aspasio: if you think it worth your while to bestow any corrections upon them, well; if not, this also is well. For my own part, so very languid are my animal spirits, I am more and more indifferent about them; I see so much weakness in my mind, and so many imperfections in my compositions, that I am afraid to venture upon the stage of observation again. An obliging letter from Mr H——r, informs me of his willingness to peruse and correct any literary attempt of mine; and discovers, I think, still more the integrity, simplicity, and piety of his heart.

I prefer both South's and Delaune's sermons to the Bishop's, for soundness of doctrine. The first might be crabbed in his temper, and the second voluptuous in his life; yet both are more evangelical in their sentiments than he is. Those who can read such kind of moral essays as the Bishop's (very improperly called sermons) as guides to heaven, and as good comforters while on earth, will one day I hope form a better judgment, and be enabled in a clearer manner to discern the things which are excellent.

On Dr Stonehouse's recommendation, I have lately read Dr Watts' treatise on "the love of God, and its influence on all the passions;" which is indeed a

most excellent book, happily calculated for usefulness. If you have never seen it, you have a pleasure yet to come, and I would by all means advise you to get it. The love of God is indeed the source and soul of religion; and what can produce it, what can cherish it, but a sense of God's love to us manifested in his dear Son? by whom we are fully assured, that he has forgiven us all trespasses, and will give us life eternal.

Present my affectionate compliments to your family, and believe me, as I really am, most cordially yours, &c.

LETTER CXXXVI.

Weston, Jan. 25. 1755.

DEAR SIR,—I REALLY forget whether I acknowledged your last favour. If I did not, let your own candour be my advocate; and my important business, under the most enervated constitution, be my plea. I have been, since I wrote, in the physician's hands, and debarred from the pulpit. Blessed be the Lord our healer, I am now restored to my usual state, and am enabled to speak a word on the Lord's day, and preach in my church on Wednesday evening, which is my lecture-day, for the honour of my Master, and, I hope, for the edification of his people. O that this privilege may be coeval with my life; and my preaching voice, and my vital breath, be stopt together!—I wish you, dear sir, many new years, much of the new man, and an abundant entrance into the New Jerusalem. Your most obliged, and truly affectionate friend.

LETTER CXXXVII.

March 4.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Do not hurry the return of the Dialogues. Take your time, that you may examine them thoroughly: none knows how far they

may spread, or how long they may live. Oh that the God of wisdom may enable you to judge aright, and correct their mistakes!

I am sorry to hear your account of our friend at ——. I wish he could be persuaded to look upon his mystic writers as his chamber-counsel; converse with them in his study, and leave them there. I was visited yesterday by a gentleman who would be a darling with Mr H——; quite fond of mystics, but does not go any great lengths; nor espouse, at least not avow or propagate, their extravagant peculiarities. Your old acquaintance Mr —— came in, and sat with us, I believe, two hours. The gentlemen happened to refer to Isaiah vi. and desired I would read the beginning of the chapter: glad of this overture, I readily embraced it, and fixed the discourse to this noble, this alarming and comfortable Scripture. Oh! let us attend, with assiduity and delight, to the holy, precious word of God: the apostle calls it αδολον γαλα, pure, unmixed, unadulterated, as though every composition had some improper tincture, was some way or other adulterated. "My son," says the God of heaven, (and it is a most important advice, a most endearing exhortation), "attend to my words, incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes, keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh."

As to Eph. iv. 16. does not συναρμολογουμενον refer to the orderly and exact arrangement? συμβιβαζομενον to the nice and strong connexions; but where is the beauty or propriety of πασης αφης της επιχορηγιας? Why, "that which every joint supplieth?" Is there any peculiar fund of nutriment lodged in the joints? Would not an anatomist have said, by that which every vessel, or every ramification of a vessel, supplieth? I sincerely pity poor ——'s case; I will give him two guineas; and hope the God whom he serves will raise him up other friends: "He that spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how shall

he not with him also freely give him all things?" Tell him this from me, though he knows it already; the Lord may make it a word in season. Charge him to say nothing of me and my mite, but as much for me to his God and Saviour as he pleases. I hope you will, when opportunity serves, strengthen Mr H—— in the faith of the gospel, and in the ways of the Lord. Let us provoke one another to love and to good works; and so much the more as we see the day approaching. Yesterday Mr —— of Cambridge called upon me: our conversation was not so edifying as I could wish; it degenerated into dispute. Mr ——, who is very much talked of, was the subject. I do not thoroughly know his scheme, but am inclined to suspect that his opponents will find it a difficult matter to maintain their ground. However, I shall not attempt to make myself fully master of the controversy. To know Christ and him crucified, *hoc nobis palmarium*. This is the desire and prayer of, ever yours, &c.

P. S.—The Latin prayer you sent me for my opinion, seems to be composed by a mystic. Not a word of Christ! Access through his blood is neglected; acceptance through his righteousness is forgotten! The grand error of the mystic divines, who, wholly intent upon what God is to do *in* us, most unhappily disregard what he has done *for* us, in the person of his beloved Son.

LETTER CXXXVIII.

Weston-Favell, March 19. 1755.

My dear Friend,—A good while ago I received your kind letter, and this week your valuable parcel. I confess myself obliged to your candour, as well as to your judgment, for excusing me, though I have not absolutely acquiesced in all your remarks; as well as for giving me many excellent corrections, which I have most thankfully adopted. I hope what I have written concerning faith, will occasion some

calm and friendly debates; I want to have that subject sifted, cleared, and stated. I must own, I am strongly inclined to side with our reformers; I cannot but think they adhere to the simplicity of the gospel. Christ died for me, seems to be the faith preached and taught by the apostles. I have not had time to peruse Mr ——, nor your manuscripts: you can hardly imagine how my time is engrossed, and my weak spirits almost overborne, partly by revising the work for a new edition, which is put to the press; partly by answering a variety of letters, sent to me on occasion of the publication; some of which censure, some approve of the performance.

I have read, with great pleasure, your short chronicle; have sent it to Mr Moses Browne, and received it again: hope you can spare it till I peruse it a second time.

I have lately been presented with a magnificent and costly Hebrew Bible, in four volumes folio, published by Father Houbigant, with which he has intermixed the apocryphal Greek books, styled by him *Deutero-canonici*. Have you seen this work, or heard its character? The author has subjoined notes to each chapter, which are employed chiefly in vindicating his alterations of the text. He is a bold enterprising writer, takes great liberties with the sacred text, and makes very many alterations, often without the authority of any manuscript, purely from his own critical judgment, or critical conjecture. If at any time you have a mind to know his opinion upon any difficult text, I will either transcribe it in his own words, or give you the substance of it in English.

His interpretation of Gen. xxii. 14. puts me in mind of an expression in your short chronicle. "It is my opinion, Abraham had never so clear a sight of the day of Christ as at this time." I fancy you will not be displeased with a copy of the learned Jesuit's criticism. "Vocavit nomen loci ejus "IEUE IRAT," Dominus videbitur. Non videtur ne ab futuro "CAH,"

aberremus. Non videbit, non modo quia non additur quid sit Deus visurus, sed etiam quia in tota illa visione, hominis est videre, Domini videri; propter quam causam Deus locum istum mox nomine visionis insigniebat. Nimirum Deus Abrahamo id ostendit, quod Abraham vidit et gavisus est, seu Filium promissionis unigenitum pro humano genere victimam olim futuram. Atque hoc illud est, quod memoriæ sempiternæ Abraham consecrabat, cum ita subjungeret, Hodie in monte Dominus videbitur; illud hodie sic accipiens, ut accepit Paulus apostolus illud Davidis, Hodie si vocem ejus audieritis; quod hodie tamdiu durat, quamdiu sæcula illa durabunt, de quibus apostolus, donec hodie cognominatur. Erant, qui sic interpretantur, quasi Moses renarret usurpatum suo tempore proverbium. Nam si sic erit, non jam docebit Abraham, cur huic loco nomen fecerit, Dominus videbitur; quam tamen nominum notationem in sacris paginis non omittunt ii, quicumque nomina rebus imponunt. Quod contra plane docebit, Abraham, si de eo Moses sic narrat, vocavit nomen loci hujus, Deus videbitur; nam dixit, In monte Deus videbitur." This is a truly grand and delightful sense; would bid fair for preference, if it could be sufficiently established. But, besides other things which might be objected to this interpretation, it seems probable that the Lord did not appear to Abraham, only called to him "UKEDA." Christ says of Abraham, that he saw, not his person, but his day; ἡμέρα signifies, I suppose, much the same "IDERUT RUBU," the remarkables, τα σημεια, in any one's life. He saw by faith his incarnation, obedience, death, all-satisfying atonement, &c. Is not this the meaning of our Lord?

Now I am upon the subject of difficult texts and exact interpretations, let me desire your opinion of Isa. xxx. 18. I have generally looked upon it as a declaration and a display of God's infinitely free grace, and profusely rich goodness. The great Vitringa considers it in quite a different light. "Moram trahet "IHEBE," Jehovah (are his words) in gratia vobis

facienda." For which sense he adds the following reason; "quia delicti gravitas repentinam gratiam non ferebat, secundum rationes justitiæ divinæ." The next clause he thus explains; Propterea, "IRUM," *i. e.* exaltabitur judici et justitia, antequam gratiam in vos exerceat.—Houbigant, on this verse, does nothing more than offer a small alteration, for "IREKIM" he would read "IREZIM," *præstolabitur*, that this verb may correspond with the preceding "IEKEH."

I proposed to have closed the plan of Theron and Aspasio with an explicit and pretty copious treatise on evangelical holiness, or obedience; and to have shewn my true believer in his dying moments. If your thoughts should happen to take such a turn, be so good, dear sir, as to suggest what you think the most advisable and advantageous way of managing this important point. This would most effectually stop the mouths of Arminians, and be the best security against the abuses of Antinomians. I could wish, if it were the Lord's will, that I might live to furnish out one more volume of this kind, and then, *manum de tabula*.

As the new edition is partly finished, and the press proceeding at a great rate, and as there will be some few emendations, you will give me leave to present you with a set of what, I hope, will be least imperfect. Till this edition is finished, let me be your debtor in point of promise; and in point of affection and gratitude, I will be your debtor so long as I am, &c.

LETTER CXXXIX.

May 21. 1755.

DEAR SIR,—MY letters to you must always begin with thanks, and will generally close with inquiries.

I am quite a proselyte to your guarded and sober method of using the Hebrew manuscript: though I talked some time ago with an adept in the sacred language, and most devout student of God's word, who would not so much as hear of alterations, from

any authority, or on any account whatever; corrections in an inspired book, were to him little better than sacrilege. The present copy of the Bible, he apprehended, was in no degree, not even a single jot or tittle, wrong. I subscribe your reasons for rejecting Father Houbigant's, and in not admitting Mr Kennicott's exposition of the Hebrew adagy, "ITHUE IRAE."

I shall treasure up your remark on the relative "ASHER," and wish you had the designing or the superintending of the cuts, which the printer of Mr Stackhouse's History of the Bible says, cost eight hundred pounds. I am delighted with your interpretation of Isaiah xxx. 18. What a charming representation it gives us of the Divine long-suffering, tender mercy, and profuse goodness! O that I might live under the clear manifestation of these lovely perfections!

In Psalm xxxvi. 1. Houbigant would read "LEBU," instead of "LEBI," and thus translates the clause, "Loquitur impius juxta; improbitatem quæ est in medio cordis ejus."

Instead of "ZIUU," Psalm cxxxiii. 3. he would introduce "SHIAU," and justifies his alteration from Deut. iv. 48. Did you ever observe this passage, and compare it with the text under consideration?

Psalm lxviii. 16. for "ERSHENI," he would substitute "EREDSHU," "mons pinguis;" which alteration he thus explains, and thus vindicates: "Est mons Dei, mons Sion, in quem asportatur arca fœderis; qui mons, collatione facta cum cæteris montibus, quorum laus est pinguedo sive ubertas, laudatur ob ejus pinguedinum; ex quo, videlicet, tempore eum montem habitat ille, qui pinguem fecit domum Obed-edom. Mons altitudinum, altero in membro, est attributum montus Sion, cæteris circum montibus altioris. Itaque mons Basan nihil hic ad rem; præsertim cum de monte Sion ea hoc in psalmo dicantur, propter quæ ille mons sit monti Sion longe anteponendus. Gen. xx. 16. Ego dedi fratri tuo argenti mille pondo, erit id tibi pro velaminibus oculorum, seu tui tibi aderunt, seu cæteri quicunque homines, ne forte te con-

cupiscant. "UGEBETHETH," verbum pro verbo, nam concupiscilibus es ob tuam pulchritudinem; ex "NECET," Arabic. verbo, ducere uxorem vel ejus matrimonium ambire." Do not you think this method of deducing the sense of Hebrew words from the present Arabic is precarious? If we knew the precise signification which Arabic words bore in the days of Moses, and what words were commonly used in that early age, there would be surer ground to proceed upon. But I apprehend the Arabic language has undergone great alterations, and received great improvements, since that period; that Golius's Lexicon is no more the Arabic used in the time of Moses, than Johnson's Dictionary is the English spoke in the days of Chaucer.

My best thanks for your plan. I propose to follow the track of Mr Marshall in his book entitled "The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification." You are acquainted, I presume, with this valuable piece of spiritual and experimental divinity; THIS, and Mr Erskine's sermons, led me into those notions of faith which are delivered in Dialogue xvi. If you have that treatise, (Marshall's I mean), I should be much obliged for your opinion of it. You ask how Houbigant reads Gen. xi. 32. Thus, "Feruntque dies Thare annorum quadraginta quinque supra centum." This, he says, is according to the Samaritan copy; and adds: "Cui scriptioni adhærendum esse, notat Sam. Bochartus; aliter enim cum Hebræo cod. pugnantia dicturum Stephanum diaconum, Acts vii. 4. Quod sic probatur: dictim fuit, ver. 26. Thare fuisse annorum 70, cum gigneret Abrahamum: Infra dicetur, (cap. xii. ver. 4.) Abrahamum fuisse annorum 75, cum ex Haran in Canaan profectus est. Ex quo efficitur ut Thare, tempore illius profectionis, annum ageret 145, atque adeo ut Thare, si quidem vixerit annos 205, fuerit totos annos 60 huic profectioni superstes. Quæ cum ita sint, non jam intelligitur, quare Stephanus dixeret Abrahamum fuisse, mortuo jam Thare, in Canaan profectum. Aut fallitur Stephanus, aut statuendum cum Sa-

codice, non plus vixisse Thare, quam annos 145. Nam per eum numerum, libri Genesis cum Stephano discordia conciliatur.—Erroris fontem aperuit Bochartus, in litera "ק" 100, pro "מ" 40, exarata. Erroris fons eo manifestior, quod in codicibus Germanicis litera "ק" pede hoc modo decurtato, "ℇ" fere similis est literæ "מ."

His marginal reading of Exod. xii. 40. is thus:—According to the Samaritan text, "ISHRAL BENI UMISHN METZRIM INARO CENOI GARO ISHBU ASHER UANUTHM." While he thus translates (for his Hebrew text is conformed to the common standard, and only in the translation his corrections are introduced), "Commoratio autem filiorum Israel, et patrum eorum qui in terra Canaan et in terra Ægypti habitarunt, fuit," &c. In his note on this passage, he refers the reader to his prolegomena; where, after he has proved that, by admitting the Samaritan reading, difficulties, otherwise inextricable, are cleared up and removed, he takes to task Grotius, Le Clerc, and Buxtorf. You will perhaps be willing to see his manner, which on many occasions is like the *scelerata sinapis*, sharp as mustard. "Non incommode, inquiebat Grotius, sic explicatur: Exilium illud Ægyptiacum durasse usque ad annum 430, ex quo Deus Abrahamo præsignificaverat. In qua Grotiana explicatione Grotium desidero. Num exilium erat Egyptiacum, tum cum Deus Abrahamo præsignificabat? Vel cui persuadebat Grotius, Mosen hæc verba, ex quo Deus Abrahamo præsignificaverat, cum dicere vellet, omisisse? Quæ verba cum suo marte Grotius; et sacra pagina invita, infercial, num huic potius credemus, ut ea verba omiserit Moses, sine quibus intelligi non posset, imo secum ipse pugnaret, quam Samaritanis, quorum diligentia commonemur Judæos scribas fuisse negligentes? Sed audiendus Joannes Clericus. Malim, inquit, ακυρολογιαν in Masoretico codice agnoscere, quam mendam. Vigilas, Clerice, cum hæc loqueris? Negas Hebr. in volumine esse mendam, hoc est, errorem a scribis Judæis profectum; eo potius inclinas, ut sit ακυρολογια,

hoc est, Mosis ipsius in temporibus notandis indiligentia? Egregiam profecto indiligentiam, ut Moses scripserit annos 430, cum scribere debuisset annos 215, eo præsertim loco, in quo tempora tam diligenter notat Moses, ut non modo annos computet, sed ipsum etiam ponat anni mensem, mensisque ipsum diem. Quid Buxtorfium dicemus, non modo, ut cæteri interpretes hic tergiversantem, sed etiam plane negantem, fuisse hic quidquam a Judæis scribis omissum? Heus tu, Buxtorfi! Illamne fuisse Mosis scriptionem putas, qua Moses Mosi contradicat, et aperte mentiri videatur? Videatur sane, inquit; sed nihil quidquam amplius Mosen scripsisse mihi quidem constat. Quonam igitur pacto, Buxtorfi, Mosen cum Mose conciliabis? Non conciliabo, inquit, si non potero, sed veto in hodierno cod. Heb. quidquam addi et suppleri. Quid ita? Quia, inquit, codices Heb. omnes hic consentiunt, et illud additamentum ignorat. Quod si autem scribæ alicujus lapsu, vel etiam pluribus excidisset, non potuisset id fieri in omnibus exemplaribus. Sed Buxtorfium nunc linquimus, Buxtorfianasque nugas, quoniam eas sumus non multo post confutaturi." I intended to have laid before you a specimen of his very bold, and, I fear, rash attempts upon the sacred texts; but these I must defer till I have the pleasure of subscribing myself, on another paper, your most obliged and truly affectionate friend.

LETTER CXL.

Dear Sir,—Herewith I send you the new edition of Theron and Aspasio. It desires your acceptance and your prayers, that it may be for the praise of the glory of God's grace in Christ, and for the edification of his people in faith and holiness.

You will find Dialogue xvi. somewhat altered, and rendered, I hope, less incorrect than in the former editions. It contains the genuine sentiments of my heart. But if they recede a hair's-breadth from the unerring standard, if they differ in one jot or tittl

from God's holy word, in that jot or tittle I most earnestly wish the world may not receive them, and that I myself may have grace to retract them. What you meet with that appears contrary to the λογος υγιης, ακαταγνωστος, freely point out. This will please, this will profit; and therefore this will oblige, dear sir, your affectionate friend, &c.

P. S.—You will permit me to keep your manuscripts a little longer; one of them, the Scriptural Chronicle, a person is transcribing. May the blessed Jesus transcribe his word and his image on our heart.

* LETTER CXLI.

My poor Fellow-Sinners,—I received a letter from you, and should have visited you; but my health is so much decayed, and my spirits are so exceedingly tender, that I could not well bear the sight of your confinement, your chains, and your miserable circumstances, as I can hardly bear the thoughts of your approaching execution, and your extreme danger of everlasting destruction. But, because I cannot come in person, I have sent you the following lines, which I hope you will consider, and which I beseech the God of all grace to accompany with his blessing.

You have been already condemned at an earthly tribunal; you are also condemned by the law of God, for thus it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them," Gal. iii. 10. If every violation of the divine law exposes you to a curse, what a multitude of curses are ready to fall upon your unhappy souls! And remember this is not the curse of a mortal man, but of the great, eternal, infinite God. If it was dismal to hear an earthly judge command you to be hanged by the neck till you are dead, how much more terrible to hear the almighty Judge

* This letter was wrote from Weston-Favell to two condemned malefactors in Northampton gaol, (namely, James Smart and Joseph Browne), about the middle of July 1755.

denounce that unalterable sentence, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!" Matt. xxv. 41. Had you committed but one sin, this would have been your deserved doom: "The wages of sin," of every sin, "is death," Rom. vi. 23. How much more of those manifold sins and multiplied transgressions of which your consciences must accuse you. You are soon to suffer the punishment of the gallows, and you are liable to the vengeance of the most high God; for thus saith the holy word, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men," Rom. i. 18. If against all and every instance of ungodliness, then how much more against your crimes, which have been of the most abominable and horrid kind! "The wrath of God!" Tremendous word! who knoweth the weight and terror of his wrath? At his rebuke the rocks melt like wax, the earth is shaken out of its place, and the pillars of heaven tremble. How then can you endure the furiousness of his wrath, and the severity of his vengeance? and that not for a day, a month, or a year, but through all the ages of eternity! Yet this is the doom of "them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. They shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." What can you do in this distressed condition? What, indeed! if you had a thousand years to live, you could not atone for one offence. How then can you make satisfaction for millions of provocations in the space of a few days? Alas! you are lost, utterly lost, in yourselves irrecoverably lost. May the God of all power make you sensible of your undone state! sensible that you are upon the brink, the very brink of an amazing, an unfathomable downfall. Perhaps you may say, Is there no hope then? is the door of heaven shut, and without any possibility of being opened to us? must we sink into unquenchable burnings; and is there not so much as a twig for us to catch at? Yes, my poor fellow-sinner

there is not only a twig, but a tree, even the tree of life, a sure support, which, if the Lord enables you to lay hold on, you may yet, even yet, be saved. Oh! beg of his wonderful goodness to accompany what you are going to read with his Holy Spirit.

Christ, the all-glorious Son of God, pitied the deplorable case of such sinners. He not only pitied, but resolved to succour and relieve them. For this purpose he came into the world, and was made man. Nay, more, he came into the place, and stood in the stead of sinners. Because we had broke the commandments of the law, he fulfilled them in all their perfection. Because we deserved the punishment of the law, he sustained it in its utmost extremity. He became poor, and had not where to lay his head, though heaven and earth were all his own. He submitted to scorn and reproach, though all the angels of God are bidden to worship him. Nay, he was condemned to death, the most shameful and tormenting death, far more shameful, and unspeakably more tormenting, than the death which you must shortly undergo. He suffered unknown pangs in his body, and inconceivable anguish in his soul, from the indignation of God. In a word, he suffered all that shame, all that torment, all that vengeance, which the unnumbered sins of the whole world deserved. Here then is your door of hope. Sins are borne by Christ; and though there be much iniquity, there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, Rom. viii. 1. Wrath is borne by Christ, so that sinners, who deserve eternal vengeance, are reconciled to God, and saved from wrath through him, Rom. v. 9, 10. A righteousness is wrought by Christ, a perfect and everlasting righteousness, such as brings incomparably greater honour to God's law, than all our transgressions bring dishonour. By all this, he has merited and obtained a full deliverance, and a complete redemption. Are you not ready to cry out, O blessed Saviour! O precious redemption! What a happiness, if we might be interested in this Saviour, and partake of this re-

demption! Millions of worlds for such a blessing! You need not give millions of worlds, no, nor any individual thing. These blessings are given freely, without money, and without price, without any deserving qualifications in us. All that are justified, are justified freely through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. But we are sinners, vile sinners; we have not only nothing good, but much and grievous guilt. The Lord convince you of this more and more! Yet remember for whom Christ died; he "died for the ungodly." What says St Paul? "In due time Christ died for the ungodly," Rom. v. 6. He died for the unjust. What says St Peter? "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust," 1 Pet. iii. 18. What says our Lord himself? "The Son of man is come to save that which was lost." Are you not ungodly men? are you not unjust persons? are you not lost creatures? For such, even for such, the divine Jesus died. Wonderful love! adorable compassion! The Lord enable you to lay hold on this hope set before you! Perhaps you may say, We are not only sinners, but the chief of sinners. O that you were convinced of this! To be the chief of sinners, makes you unpardonable before men; but this is no difficulty with Christ, and should be no hinderance of your coming to Christ. Christ's merit and righteousness are infinite. They are as able to satisfy for a debt of ten thousand talents, as for a debt of a single farthing. Hear what the Scriptures saith upon this subject: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief," 1 Tim. i. 15. He came, not to save sinners only, but the very chief of sinners. And he is "able to save them to the very uttermost." But our sins are heinous, they have been often repeated, and long continued in. What says the apostle? "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." Another apostle declares, "By him," by the divinely excellent Redeemer, "all that believe are justified from all

things;" from all accusations, be they ever so numerous; from all iniquities, be they ever so enormous. Nay, so wonderfully efficacious is the power of his death, that, through his great atonement, sins which are as crimson, are made white, white as snow, Isa. i. 18. But will Christ vouchsafe his great salvation to us? Hear his own words, "Him that cometh to me" for pardon and salvation, "I will in no wise cast out." Be his guilt ever so great, this shall be no bar. I will not on any consideration reject or deny his suit. Only let him come as a poor undone creature, and he shall find me willing and mighty to save. Nay, he invites you to come. These are his gracious words, "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden," heavy laden with sin and misery, "and I will give you rest," Matt. xi. 28. I will deliver you from going down into the pit; I will deliver you from the vengeance of eternal fire. All your sin shall be upon me, and all my righteousness shall be upon you. Go to a great man on earth, beg of him to use his interest in your behalf; he would scorn to take notice of you. But your dear, tender, compassionate, most condescending Saviour, invites you to come to him, and assures you he will not abhor nor cast you out. Go to your earthly judge, entreat him on your bended knees to pardon you: He perhaps cannot, must not: the laws forbid him. But it is not so with Jesus Christ: he has made a full satisfaction for sin; he has made an infinite atonement for sin; and were your sins ten thousand thousand times greater than they are, before the power of his death they would all vanish away; by the washing of his blood they would all be as though they had never been.

This then should be the one desire of your souls, your incessant prayer to God, that you may come to Christ, that you may believe in Christ, that you may be found in Christ: then you will not perish, though you deserve it, but have everlasting life through his name; then you will have just the same foundation for your hope, as I must myself have when I shall

depart this life. When I shall be summoned to the great tribunal, what will be my plea, what my dependence? Nothing but Christ! Christ, would I say, has been wounded for my sins, therefore they will not be punished in me. Christ has fulfilled all righteousness in my stead, therefore I trust to be justified when I am judged. I am a poor unworthy sinner; but worthy is the Lamb that was slain, worthy is the Lamb that was slain, for whose sake I shall receive both pardoning mercy, and everlasting glory. This is my only hope, and this is as free for you as it is for your friend and fellow-sinner, &c.

P. S.—What I have written, I shall beg of God to bless; and will attend you with my prayers, though I cannot visit you in person.

LETTER CXLII.

Weston-Favell, Sept. 10. 1755.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—YOU may justly wonder that I have not acknowledged the favour of your last, long before this. Do me the justice to believe, that this is not owing to the least disesteem of your correspondence, or any insensibility of your kindness. I hope my heart is, though sadly depraved, yet sincerely grateful; and I am sure, I esteem your letters as treasures. Though I destroy almost all I receive, every one of yours is preserved. Let me, therefore, earnestly beg that you will not follow my example, but suffer your letters to be much more speedy in their arrival than mine. You would more easily excuse me if you knew me. The grasshopper is a burden to me. Every blast blows me down, or my continual indisposition and inconceivable languors pierce through me. I now hang a swelled face over my paper; occasioned only by taking the air yesterday in my chair, and finding a sharper atmosphere than for many weeks I had been accustomed to. Pray for me, dear sir, that, established in Christ, and strong in his faith, I may be looking for, and hasten to the coming of the day of God; when this

poor, enervated, crazy body, will (to the everlasting glory of free grace) be made like unto Christ's glorious body.

I live with my mother and sister. Our method is, every morning at nine, when we breakfast, to read a verse or two from the Bible, and make it the subject of our conversation. The other day, we were reading in Psalm lxxxiv. 4. Immediately a doubt arose in my mind, how the fact, which is here affirmed, could possibly happen. Could the sparrows and swallows build their nests, lay their eggs, and hatch their young, on God's altar, which was every morning and evening statedly, and I suppose many other times in the day occasionally, surrounded by crowds of worshippers, on which the sacred fire was constantly burning, and which was in a manner covered with flame and smoke, whenever the sacrifices were offered. Now to have birds lay aside all their fear of man, their greater dread of fire, and make such an altar their house, is strange, is scarce credible, and must, if true, be miraculous. Consulting Houbigant, I find he was sensible of the difficulty, and solves it, not from any manuscript, but from his own invention, thus: "Nos vero, ne oratio trunca maneat, supplemus ante hæc duo verba, Ego vero quando tandem, tacito verbo, adero ad, quod solet reticeri."

I have met with other bold strokes in this commentator, which I want to submit to your examination. But these let me postpone, in order to desire your opinion concerning the plan of my new work; which, with a weak hand and a desponding heart, I have sketched out, determined to try, (though with very little hope of being enabled to execute), resting satisfied in this persuasion, that the issue of things is in the hand of the Lord, and he will frustrate or accomplish, as he knows to be most expedient.

The Plan of the Supplement to Theron and Aspasio.

Pleasure and happiness of Christ's religion; (for I am of the same mind with Mr Marshall in his

Treatise on Sanctification, namely, that we must partake of the comforts of the gospel, before we can practise the duties of the law.) Theron oppressed with fears, on account of his numerous sins. Discouraged with doubts, on account of his imperfect obedience. The cordials of the gospel re-administered, with some additional spirit and strength. Objections to assurance of faith, stated, discussed, answered. Vital holiness; its nature, necessity, excellency. Its grand efficient, the blessed Spirit. Its principal instrument, true faith; mixed with which, the Scriptures, the Lord's supper, prayer, the divine promises, are powerful and effectual means; disunited from which, they are a dead letter and insignificant ordinances. The evangelical principles of holiness, such as, "I beseech you by the mercies of God—Ye are bought with a price—Ye are the temples of the living God," &c.; all these privileges, though not hereditary, yet indefeasible; or the final perseverance of the believer. Our friends part; renew their correspondence; Theron desires to glorify the God of his salvation, asks advice concerning the best method of family-worship, educating children, instructing servants, edifying acquaintance. On each of these particulars Aspasio satisfies his inquiry, enlarges on the subject of education, especially of daughters; as that seems to be most neglected, or the proper way of conducting it least understood. Letter on the covenant of grace, comprising the substance, and being a kind of recapitulation of the three foregoing volumes. Aspasio seized with a sudden and fatal illness; his sentiments and behaviour in his last moments.

If, dear sir, you see any thing in this plan that is improper, correct it; any thing that is defective, supply it; and if any thoughts occur on any of the topics, be so kind as to suggest them. Pray have you ever seen a book, lately presented to me, and entitled, The Marrow of Modern Divinity, with notes by Mr Boston? If you have seen it, you will not deny me

the satisfaction of knowing your sentiments concerning it. Yesterday a learned minister (a stranger) called upon me, and, among other subjects, we talked of that remarkable passage in Isaiah, "She hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." What do you think is the exact meaning of the prophet? "GEKELIM" is a peculiar word. Houbigant translates the clause, "Postquam pro peccatis suis multis dedit Domino duplices pœnas;" and supposes the two captivities, Assyrian and Roman, to be the double punishment. My pious visitant referred it to the satisfaction made by Jesus Christ. I objected, that God, not the church, received this. To which he replied, That the church receives the benefit of the satisfaction; and the expression might be synecdochical, the thing purchased for the thing purchasing. This interpretation, I fancy, would have been clearer and less exceptionable, if he had used the word *punishment*, instead of *satisfaction*. Then, as Christ and the church are one, his sufferings might be called hers, and his righteousness is reckoned hers. Vitringa gives a future signification to the verb "LAKETHE:" She shall receive, not double punishment, but double blessings, agreeably to that doctrine taught by St Paul, "Where sin hath abounded, grace shall much more abound." I shall be glad of your opinion on this point; glad of your assistance in my purposed work; and, above all, glad of your fervent prayers for, dear sir, your obliged and faithful friend.

LETTER CXLIII.

Friday evening.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—As to the matter of defending ME, I think *non est tanti*. I am ten thousand times more for your conversing like a Christian on every occasion. Take all proper opportunities of glorifying your divine Master, and be spreading abroad the savour of his blessed name. It would bring dignity to your character, I am persuaded, and

would command reverence even from gainsayers, if you was sometimes to make a frank declaration on this head, and act accordingly. Do not scruple to bid your patients seek to God for a blessing; when they are recovered, remind them of their obligations to the Almighty Physician: they are restored to health, not for the poor purposes of eating and drinking a little more, but to acquaint themselves with Christ Jesus, to prepare for eternity, and make their salvation sure. This would be truly graceful, might do much good; and should any one find fault with this practice, he must not pretend to the piety of a Christian; he has not the religion of a Heathen. Such a one should remember the conduct, and consider the sentiments of your brother *Iapis.*

Non hæc humanis opibus, non arte magistra
Provenïunt; neque te Æneæ, mea dextera servat;
Major agit Deus, atque opera ad majora remittit.
VIRG. ÆN. lib. xii.

No mortal work is THIS; no cure of mine;
Nor art's effect, but done by hands divine:
'Tis God Æneas to the battle sends;
'Tis God preserves his life for greater ends.

Thanks for your advice about what I recommended to your consideration, and about my own health: God has been better to me than my apprehensive heart expected. O that, so long as I have breath, it may be employed to his honour, who forgiveth all our sins, and healeth all our infirmities, and when he heals them not, will make them a blessing.

Do, my dear friend, persist, in a prudent way, to bear your testimony for a Master, who has bought you with his very life, and intends to make you partaker of his everlasting kingdom. If this does you or yours any real harm, reproach me with it when we shall both stand in the presence of the whole world, and before the tribunal of our Judge.—Ever yours, while, &c.

P. S.—You tell me, that "your business has lain so wide, and you have been so much hurried thi-

sickly time, that you have scarcely had a quarter of an hour to yourself for these last three weeks." O, my dear friend! how much soever you may be hurried by the distance and the multiplicity of your avocations, do not forget to pray for that wisdom which is profitable (or useful) to direct us (Eccl. x. 10.) even in the smallest matters, much more in all great and weighty affairs. You who move in so conspicuous a sphere, so large a field of action, must have very particular occasion, very pressing necessity for divine direction; and therefore that important ejaculation, DIRECT ME, O LORD, should ever be uppermost in your thoughts. "Take ye heed, watch and pray;" this is the kind admonition of the blessed Jesus, who well knows the human frame, and sees how very liable we are to be drawn aside by a variety of temptations with which we are daily surrounded.

LETTER CXLIV.

DEAR SIR,—As the interval between the hour of our dissolution, and the day of resurrection, will, in all probability, be very considerable, much longer than the time of our continuance on earth; it is a very reasonable and important inquiry to examine into the circumstances of this state. The Scripture, our infallible director, which is (so copious upon all the grand articles of religion, and) silent upon nothing that relates to the true happiness of mankind, has not left us without information in this particular: Whereas all other writers grope in the dark; not one of them has been able to draw back the curtain, or give us (any) the least insight into the invisible world; it is to them, and in all their systems, an absolute *terra incognita*. A few of the scriptural discoveries may be seen in the answer to the following queries.

1*st*, When the souls, the souls of the righteous, depart from the body, by whom are they received?

By holy angels. The angels were ministering spirits to them in the days of their flesh, and will be their guard and their convoy when they relinquish the earthly tabernacle. When Lazarus died, he was carried by angels. What a comfortable privilege is this! not to be left solitary and desolate, like a shipwrecked mariner on some unknown coast; but to be under the guidance and protection of those benevolent beings!

2dly, In what place are they lodged? This is described, not from our ideas of locality, or any properties of space, but from the society and enjoyments. It is not very material whether they are above or below, in the heaven of heavens (which, I think, is most probable) or in some separate mansion. A disembodied spirit, if under the wrath of God, must every-where be extremely miserable; if surrounded with his favour, will every-where be exceedingly happy. To such a spirit, that has no longer any connexion with sensible things, God's smile must be heaven, God's frown must be hell. Wherever this region lies, we are sure it lies under the beams of the Sun of Righteousness; Christ is there, and where he is present, happiness cannot be absent. "Thou shalt be with me," is his promise to the penitent thief. Abraham is there, the friend of God, and father of the faithful. Lazarus, we are told, was carried into Abraham's bosom; and where he resides, where all the children of God and heirs of glory dwell, there must be pleasures; such pleasures, that the place is called paradise; "Thou shalt be with me in paradise." The delightful garden of Eden, which the Lord himself planted, and which innocent man inhabited, was incomparably the finest, noblest spot in this sublunary world; and this is used to give us some faint representation of those blessed abodes, where the souls and spirits of the righteous remain till the shout of the archangel and the trump of God summon them.

3dly, How soon are they lodged in this desirable

situation? Without delay. I find no mention of any intermediate purgation, or of any period for inactivity and forgetfulness: "To-day shalt thou be with me," is our Lord's expression; and it is observable, that the Jewish day was very near closing, when our Saviour gave up the ghost; nearer still when that converted malefactor expired. "I have a desire to be dissolved," says St Paul, "and to be with Christ;" he speaks of his release from clay, and his introduction into the Redeemer's presence, as instantaneous. No sooner does the former commence, but the latter takes place. What an encouragement is this to fight the good fight of faith, and finish our course with alacrity and diligence, since we are not to wait in wishful but disappointed expectation! No, the very moment our warfare is accomplished, our reward begins! Which reminds me of another inquiry.

4*thly*, What is the condition of holy souls, in this separate state?

1. They rest from their labours; from all the disorders that afflicted their bodies, from all the temptations that disquieted their souls. They are no longer ridiculed and persecuted by ungodly men. They have no more conflict with the powers of darkness and their own corruptions; sin and sorrow cease eternally. They are freed, entirely freed, from every evil.

2. They enter into peace. They have then peace with God, peace in their own thoughts, peace with fellow-saints, which passeth all understanding. Peace implies a positive happiness. Peace, in the scriptural language, denotes all manner of blessing, and such is its import in the preceding passage. In this large extent will it be made good to the righteous. When they relinquish the earthly tabernacle, the scales of ignorance fall from their understandings; their will is wonderfully conformed to Christ's; every weight drops off from their affections; and their holiness is exceedingly confirmed. They are honoured with nearer approaches to God, they are favoured

with clearer manifestations of his glory, they feel richer emanations of his love, and are more and more transformed into his image; every doubt vanishes, and they rejoice in the prospect, the assured and refreshing prospect of receiving all the fulness of their everlasting felicity. I said fulness; for though the felicity of the soul upon its dismission from mortality is great, is high, is to us inconceivable; yet it will not be complete till the body is reunited to it, reanimated by it. Then that will not only be rescued from corruption, but made like unto Christ's glorious body, will be dignified with divine approbation, and that before the largest assembly of men and angels: they will receive a crown of righteousness; they will sit on thrones, and judge the apostate angels; they will then possess the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

What is said of the righteous may lead us to some proper conceptions with regard to the wicked and their state: the one is the reverse of the other; as they were quite dissimilar in their life, in their death they are equally different. If the righteous are committed to the care of benevolent angels, the wicked, it is very probable, are abandoned to the insults and rage of malevolent spirits. If the righteous are admitted into mansions of bliss, the wicked are consigned over to the places of horror and torment, where is all the misery which is expressed by weeping and wailing; all that self-condemnation and anguish, which is expressed by gnashing of teeth. If the righteous enjoy the calm of uninterrupted tranquillity, and the light of perpetual sunshine, the wicked are reserved in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day; wearied by their own ungovernable passions, stung by eager but unsatisfied desires, haunted by a stern upbraiding conscience. In a word, while the righteous are looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and their Saviour Jesus Christ; they are trembling under the dismal apprehensions of that dreadful day, when Jesus Christ shall be revealed in flaming fire.

I add only a remark on that text of St John, to which we are so much obliged in this inquiry, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord," &c. The Lord must certainly signify the Lord Jesus Christ. To die in him, must, I think, imply dying in his faith, so as to be one with him; interested in his mercy, renewed by his Spirit, and conformed in some prevailing degree to his image. May this be the state of our souls, while we live here, and when we depart hence. Then that will be fulfilled, to our unspeakable and eternal comfort, which is spoken by another apostle, "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." I am, dear sir, yours sincerely.

LETTER CXLV.

Weston, Saturday morning.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I THOUGHT of you in a particular manner on Thursday, being the sad anniversary on which your late excellent lady resigned this life; and at the same time I thought on those tender lines,

> Jamque dies, ni fallor, adest; quem semper acerbum,
> Semper honoratum, sic Dii voluistis, habebo.*
>
> VIRG. ÆN. lib. v.

I cannot but take notice of the wisdom and piety of my favourite poet; he teaches his hero to resolve all afflictive and dark dispensations into the gracious will of God, and to derive his consolation from this belief. *Sic Dii voluistis*, is a sort of imitation of the good old priest Eli, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." It is not much unlike the exemplary acknowledgment of the patriarch Job, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord!"

I am thankful for your present of *Vanierii prædium Rusticum*. It is a very beautiful piece: *uni Virgilio secundus*; the most elegant and correct Latin

* The English of which is, "Now the day, if I mistake not, is at hand, which (such has been the will of Heaven) I shall always account a day of sorrow, a day to be honoured."

composition that I have met with among the moderns.

I have no fault to find, and no alteration to offer, with regard to the little tract that you submit to my correction. But what shall I say to my dear friend himself? Oh! what opportunities of doing good, substantial and immortal good, do you lose, do you squander away! Opportunities, that are flying from you upon the swiftest wings of time; and when once gone, are never to be recovered. I do not so much as think of your neglecting business; but do let the world see, that business may be managed, great business managed, and yet Christ and eternal ages not forgot. Let men see, that the comforts of Christianity, the privileges of the gospel, are so truly delightful, as to be the most effectual sovereign refreshment under the fatigues of a burdensome employ. Thus doing, you would be a credit and high recommendation to religion; and blessed would you be, if your Master, when he cometh, should find you so doing. You will excuse my freedom; and, in return, I will not cease to pray, that the "love of Christ may constrain you," 2 Cor. v. 14. I am, &c.

LETTER CXLVI.

Tuesday morning.

My dear Friend,—Well might Dr Doddridge say, "that in Saurin's sermons, the excellencies of Demosthenes and Cicero were united." Never did I meet with any thing equal to the passages which the Doctor was so obliging as to translate, purposely to give me some ideas of this celebrated writer. He seems to have understood the gospel well, and all the powers of oratory were combined in him. I dare say he preached from his heart, and the grace of God accompanied his words. If I have been so much affected, merely by this desultory translation, how much more should I be transported, was I (like you) sufficiently skilled in the French language to

read the original itself! Saurin, it seems, was a Protestant; and I am told, that in Holland, where he exercised his ministry, the streets were so crowded for several hours before the service began, that it was very difficult to gain admission. Is it not astonishing, that the sermons of so popular a preacher, and so eminent a writer, should not as yet have been put into an English dress? But this I presume is owing to the difficulty of doing justice to an author of his extraordinary genius. I am well aware, that few are equal to such an undertaking; but if there was a spirited translation of these animating sermons, published in weekly numbers, they would be well received, and might, through the divine blessing, be the means of doing much good to the community.

I have been enabled, blessed for ever be God! to perform my office, and preach to a crowded congregation. "Jesus said the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" was the text. O that it may be the power of God to the salvation of the hearers! I hope, my disorder in my head, and pain in my teeth, are not increased, though I felt the cold air breathe upon my face; for the church was so thronged, that it was not practicable to shut the door. O for faith in the Almighty Guardian, the Almighty Physician!

This, I presume, will find you safely returned from London to your own habitation; but though come back to your resting-place, yet more and more sensible that we are but strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

I hope ere long to see you at Weston; for I can assure you, my dear sir, that amongst the many, many friends that dearly love you, no one can have a more affectionate regard for you than, yours unalterably, &c.

LETTER CXLVII.

Sept. 25. 1755.

DEAR SIR,—I lately received a letter from my very valuable friend Mr ——, an extract of which I

here transcribe, as he has made some just remarks on Mr Burnham's blamable behaviour, in refusing the help of a physician. I believe you can answer for me, that I shall never be guilty of that fault; as I think altogether with the wise son of Sirach, that "the Lord hath created the physician, and that such are to be regarded for the uses we may have of them. The Lord likewise hath created medicines out of the earth, and he that is wise will not abhor them," Eccl'us. xxxviii.

"I have," says my correspondent, "been reading Burnham's Pious Memorials, as it was published with a recommendatory preface by you, in behalf of his distressed widow. The dying behaviour of Dr Andrew Rivet, page 212, and Dr Peter du Moulin, page 263, charms me exceedingly. Every word has its weight, and shines like a well-set diamond in a ring; or, as Solomon expresses it, like an apple of gold in a picture of silver. Mr Burnham was undoubtedly an excellent man, but he does not seem to come up to these in divine knowledge. Methinks I do not so well approve of his refusing the help of a PHYSICIAN, page 431, and the slight with which he treated such a proposal. It does indeed shew, that he lived quite above the fear of death; but at the same time it shews great weakness of mind. Life and health are mercies in the esteem of Heaven; and the dying Christian ought to esteem every thing as God esteems it. Suppose such a one desires to die, yet still he ought to use every lawful means to live, to make the will of God his own, and to be willing to continue even out of heaven, as long as his heavenly Father pleases. The same weakness of mind appears in his desiring his friends not to pray for his life, and in his being sorry that they made so much ado, page 433. Had he requested them to pray for him importunately, yet in humble submission to the will of God, and to be sure to acquiesce in it, whether for life or death, methinks it had been better. An earnest desire of a speedy dissolution has led some pio-

martyrs, and some dying Christians too, into a mistake, which it is proper to take notice of, but more proper to avoid."

How do you approve of the following method, in conversing with the survivors after the loss of a dear child or friend? It is merely a sketch; yet a due regularity is preserved by the three divisions; and some of the heads in each division are to be enlarged upon or omitted, and others added occasionally. The use of such sketches may be seen in the preface to Mr Richard's "Hints for Religious Conversation with the Afflicted;" whose plan, though some of his hints are not sufficiently adapted to the case described, I highly approve; as it cannot but be serviceable to every Christian who is desirous of entering into spiritual discourse; and more particularly to young clergymen, who would do well to transcribe, study, and improve those hints; as they are too often at a loss how to exhort, admonish, or comfort, as various dispositions and circumstances require. When you send me your opinion, make such alterations as occur to you.

The Consolation.

It is God's will; who still continues many comforts to us.

His will always wise, good, best.

We are his creatures. He has a right to us, as we have to our cattle or lands.

It is the Lord's doing. This was the support of Eli, Job, Hezekiah.

The Improvement.

"For us men sicken, and for us they die." (Dr Young's Night Thoughts).

To wean our hearts from the world.

To set our affections there where true joys are to be found.

To excite us with greater diligence to prepare for our own great change.

Our own Preparation.

The only preparation is to secure the favour of Christ, and an interest in his merits, by which we are pardoned and justified.

A participation of the Spirit of Christ, by which we are made fit for heaven.

I hope you remember, not without a pleasing mixture of gratitude and joy, your divine, yet bleeding Lord. I hope you feel a more comfortable trust, that your sins are done away through that all-atoning blood; and that you pray with a more steady faith for that most blessed Spirit, which was sealed to our enjoyment in the holy sacrament, of which we were so lately partakers.

I desire you would enter into some spiritual conversation with the bearer, whom I have recommended to you; you will then see the more than rocky hardness of the human heart, and the absolute need of prayer, and almighty grace, in order to make it susceptible of saving impressions. I dare say you will draw several useful conclusions from this interview, though your attempts for his benefit I fear will prove ineffectual.

A gentleman yesterday told a story, well attested, which you will be pleased to hear, as it shews in a very strong light the use of those passages of Scripture which the unthinking are too apt to consider as useless. A certain libertine, of a most abandoned character, happened accidentally to stroll into a church, where he heard the fifth chapter of Genesis, importing that so long lived such and such persons, and yet the conclusion was, they died. Enos lived 905 years, and he died; Seth 912, and he died; Methuselah 969, and he died. The frequent repetition of the words HE DIED, (notwithstanding the great length of years they had lived), struck him so deeply with the thought of death and eternity, that it changed his whole frame. He attended the remaining part of

the divine service with the utmost seriousness; went home, and prayed earnestly to God for forgiveness, and the assistance of his Holy Spirit; and became, from an infamous libertine, a most exemplary Christian. By this chapter we see, how soon youth, health, and all worldly delights must end. This, to a worldly-minded man, casts a damp upon all these desirable things; but to a soul acquainted with Christ, and an affection removed from hence already, no thought is so sweet as this. Enos died, Seth died, Methuselah died, and (blessed be God for the privilege of death) so shall I. It helps much to carry us cheerfully through wrestlings and difficulties, through better and worse. We see the land of promise near. We shall quickly pass Jordan, and be at home. There will be an end of the many vexations of this life, an end of sin, an end of temptations, nay, an end of prayer itself; to which will succeed new songs of endless praises. Oh, let us often reflect on what St Peter advances, "The end of all things is, therefore, at hand; be ye sober, and watch unto prayer;" 1 Pet. iv. 7.

I hope you will well weigh this, and introduce spiritual discourse whenever a fair opportunity presents. Set your face as a flint amongst the great. Establish your heart as a rock; and let nothing, nothing divert you from furthering the interest of Christ, wherever you yourself have any interest. It is like plunging into cold water perhaps at first, but afterwards comes a glow all over you. Remember what I now say, should you live thirty or forty years longer, yet when you come to die, take my word for it, you will wish you had conversed more on and for Christ.

I am satisfied from the sacred oracles, as clear as light, concerning the origin of evil. And if any one, without having recourse to revelation, can satisfactorily solve that question, *erit mihi magnus Apollo.* My dear friend, let the word of Christ dwell in us richly.

Thanks for the use of Wharton's and Pitt's Virgil. All the Syrens sing in his lines, but the JOYFUL SOUND is no where heard. Was the ear of our soul tuned aright, there would be more music in this one sentence from the King of heaven, "I have called you friends," (John xv. 15.) than in all the Iliad and all the Æneid. I am ever and affectionately yours, &c.

LETTER CXLVIII.

Weston-Favell, Sept. 20. 1755.

DEAR SIR,—YOU threaten to put my patience to the trial, by a very long letter of scriptural criticisms. I shall only reply, O that my patience may support all other trials with the same complacency and cheerfulness, as I am persuaded it will support itself under this! Your observations I very much value, and take a singular pleasure in reading. The Lord Jesus enable you to multiply them, and me to profit from them! and help us both to love his holy name, ever more and more!

I am entirely of your opinion with regard to the worth, the inestimable worth, of the present life; especially when there is a comfortable prospect of being useful in our generation. This state affords the only opportunity of doing good to immortal souls. The dead serve not their Lord in the work of the gospel. The living, the living only, are intrusted with the precious office of turning sinners from darkness to light; therefore the living should value this distinguished prerogative at a high rate. Perhaps you think that I was the writer of Mr Burnham's life. From a question proposed to me very lately by a clergyman, I fancy that others think the same;* but I neither was the author, nor do I know the author's name.

I have sent you the third edition of Theron and

* Mr Hervey was solicited to write the preface to Burnham's Pious Memorials, which he complied with as an act of compassion to the widow, who thought his name might promote the sale of the book for her benefit. See this preface, Vol. V.

Aspasio: you will observe, that I have made some alteration in Dialogue xvi. and that I still adhere to my first opinion with regard to faith. I assure myself you can bear with me, though I should continue, in this particular point, to vary somewhat from your way of thinking. I shall be truly glad and thankful, if you will examine me with the rigour of a critic, and muster up against my doctrine the strongest objections you can conceive; for I do earnestly wish, and frequently pray, that not any notion of mine, but the holy truth of God may prevail. You will also observe, what advantage I have made of your remark on Vitringa's interpretation of Isaiah xxx. 18.

I shall expect your animadversions on Mr Marshall with eagerness; and though he is my counsellor, my comforter, and my favourite, I trust I shall not be blind to his faults, nor refuse to see his mistakes. May the wisdom of Heaven guide, direct, and teach, dear sir, your affectionate and obliged friend, &c.

LETTER CXLIX.

Weston-Favell, Oct. 23. 1755.

My dear Friend,—I have received, and am very much obliged for your remarks on Mr Marshall's treatise of Sanctification. They are truly judicious; and several of them command my assent. You will wonder to see, how strongly I have recommended this book in the second volume of my Theron and Aspasio. It has been eminently blessed to my own soul: there is no religious treatise I read, which does me more good. Pray be so kind as to execute what you proposed. Shew me how Mr Marshall's method may be improved; for I would gladly tread in his steps, on this account, as well as on others, that I may have an opportunity of acknowledging his mistakes, and cautioning my reader.

Downhame's Christian Warfare, against the devil, the world, and the flesh, I will immediately endeavour to procure. I should be glad if you would point out other excellent books. I am sometimes

asked to give a friend or a student a catalogue of the most excellent authors, (particularly of religious authors). To do this, seems to be a valuable piece of service, especially as it is so unhappily neglected by the conductors of our youthful studies.

Your last paragraph is particularly kind and obliging; but however your benevolence may regard and represent it, I shall always esteem and acknowledge it as a singular favour to receive your critical observations; in which, as in the threads made of silk and gold, there is always a most agreeable mixture of learning and devotion.

Pray what do you apprehend to be the meaning of St Paul, 1 Cor. ix. 26. ουκ ως αδηλως. Dr Doddridge translates the passage thus: "Not as one who is to pass undistinguished." In the same chapter, verse 28. another difficulty occurs, ινα συγκοινωνος αυτου γενωμαι. 1 Cor. xii. 31. Ζηλουτε δε τα χαρισματα τα κρειττονα, Dr Doddridge understands as a reprehension, not as an encouragement. He translates the words, "Ye contend earnestly about the best gifts;" and interprets the clause, "envying, and, it may be, detracting from the superior endowments of others." Is this right? See chap. xiv. 1. I am at some loss to make out the propriety of Το καθ' ημων χειρογραφον, Col. ii. 14. How is the hand-writing of ordinances said to be contrary to us? The ceremonial law, which I suppose is meant by δογμασιν, was not contrary to, but promotive of the comfort and peace of the Jewish worshippers. The moral law indeed spoke terror, and nothing but terror, to impotent man. But the law of sacrifices and washings brought the glad tidings of atonement and purification, which must be very consolatory. What is the precise signification of εξαλειψας, ηρκεν, προσηλωσας? Do they refer to any usages customary and current in those times?

Let me now submit to your examination, a very singular criticism or two of Father Houbigant's. On Isa. ii. 22. he says, "Non dubitamus, quin fuerit olim scriptum, 'HUA NESHEB BENEMAH BU,' Nam

altitudinem flatu dejicit. Homo, cujus spiritus est in naribus ejus, est ipse filius hominis, Messias, de quo in toto hoc capite vaticinatur Jesaias. Quem Messiam Judæi, nisi violare timent, monet eos non impune laturos. Quia Messias, homo factus, volvit naribus ventos et tempestates, quibus ipsorum et urbem et rempublicam sit eversurus." Again, chap. iii. 10. he says, 'AMODU ZADOK:' "Plerique, post Vulgatum, dicite justo, qua interpretatione peccant dupliciter. Nam 1. legitur 'ZADOK,' justus vel justum, non 'LEZADOK,' justo. 2. Parum ad rem terribilibus minis, quæ antecesserunt et quæ sequuntur, interseritur iste sermo ad justum habitus. Nobis satis est 'ASEKU' pro 'ATEDU.' Nempe erat futurum, ut Judæi justum ligarent, Romanisque vinctum traderent." His version is, "Alligant justum, qui bonus est." You will begin to think that our author is extremely fond of the spiritual sense, and desirous to find Christ or Christian sentiments in every place. But he is seldom (however it has happened in the aforecited texts) liable to err on this side of the question. Hear what he remarks on Isa. xxxiii. 24. "'OIN BETHNES HAHUNESHEB TOM HELAH.' Agitur præda exercitus Assyriorum, post eorum fugam, dividenda inter eos, qui vicinis in locis habitant. Nihil ad eam prædam iniquitas: Nihil etiam ad antedicta, qui habitat in ea. Nam ea, de qua habitatione dicatur, nescitur. Nihil denique ad rem 'TI HEL,' ægar sum. Non promiserat Deus, nullos fore in regione ægrotos, aut in lecto jacentes tum, cum dividenda esset præda. Sed omnia plana et commoda erunt, si pro 'HELETH' legas 'BELITHI,' prohibitus sum; si pro 'BETH BEM,' in eis, si denique pro 'OIN' legas 'ODEN,' prædam suam, 'KESHA KOM HASHEB DOM KOLIAH SHEBEN IASEK LEKUBEL.' Non dicet vicinus, prohibitus sum; populus qui habitabit apud eos, tollet prædam suam. Quibus verbis prænunciatur, prædam de Assyriis fore tantam, ut omnes licentiam habituri sint prædandi, et abducendi domum prædas suas."

Hos. vi. 3. "'UBEDOH' et cognoscamus. Parum commode cognoscamus, ubi sequitur, et persequamur cognitionem. Propterea non dubitamus, quin Osee scripserit 'REKUODAH' et conveniamus, ut deinde apte veniat, et sequamur, sive curramus ad cognoscendum Dominum." The next verse he thus translates: "Quid faciam tibi, Ephraim, quid faciam tibi Juda, ut adsit vobis misericordia, velut matutina nubes, et ut res quæ mane effunditur? Certe ego, quod volui, feci prophetis tuis; interfeci eos per verba oris mei, et ex judiciis de te meis lux orietur." He changes 'HOBETU' into 'HESOTU.'

I was not a little puzzled about Jer. xviii. 14. Houbigant, according to his custom, first alters, then interprets; thus he would read the passage: "'UDEMU KEDOS MOM UBMESHON AM LEBBANON SHUDSHELEG TOSEK TOZEB GUZELUM.' An deserit calx pætram, vel nix Libanum? An relinquant aquæ scaturientes defluxus currentium aquarum?"

When you have leisure and inclination for critical studies, I shall be greatly obliged for your opinion on these points; as I am for your very friendly and very solid defence of me in the London Magazine. May the King of saints prosper the works of your pen, and return the acts of your kindness into your own bosom! Let me once more beg of you to direct me to the most improving books you have met with. No longer ago than yesterday a young clergyman, whom I had never seen before, made me a visit, and attended a lecture which I gave my parish in Weston church on a Wednesday evening, at seven o'clock. An amiable gentleman truly! He seems mighty well inclined; wonders that his brethren do not make edifying subjects, such as justification, and sanctification, the favourite topics of their discourse. Now I do not know what more substantial service I could do such a person, than to recommend to his study some proper books. The tidings therefore of a judicious evangelical author, with a little sketch of his character and distinguishing excellency, might be a blessing to others, and a blessing to myself. A

favour, a welcome favour, I am very sure, it would be to, dear sir, your much obliged, and truly affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER CL.

Weston-Favell, Dec. 13. 1755.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I RECEIVED your last valuable favour in due time. I should have made my acknowledgments sooner, but I staid to get the enclosed little pamphlet, * which I want much to have you peruse, and to have your opinion concerning it. There seems to me to be much good sense and solid argument, much more than, I apprehend, could have been produced on the occasion. I read your remarks with great attention, and I humbly trust that God will execute the office, and accomplish the blessing mentioned in the portion of Scripture which gave a relish to our breakfast this morning.

"DOTH ADAM HEMLAMAD."—Psalm xciv. 10.

I read the passage in a small Hebrew Bible without points; and the first word in the verse seemed to me, not "TISEK," but "HE-ISED," which, in my opinion, yields the best sense: He that "made, upholds, establishes the nations," &c. I have consulted Houbigant, but he makes no alteration.

Indeed we have need of divine teaching. Amidst the variety of opinions, which ever did, and perhaps ever will subsist in our imperfect state, he only who is the wonderful Counsellor, possesses the unerring clue. A letter from Dunfermline in Scotland, received by the last post, and written by a stranger, informs me, that upon the doctrine of sanctification there is a standard book; and this standard book, he adds, is Marshall's Gospel Mystery. Mr Moses Browne tells me, he is publishing a little piece of poetry, entitled Percy Lodge, the Duke of Somerset's seat; [wrote at the desire of the late duke and duchess, in the year 1749. Had they lived, poor

* A little pamphlet on the Marks and Evidences of Faith, wrote by Mr Cudworth of Norwich.

Browne would have met with the encouragement he deserves. They loved him, and fully intended to have served him.] When it makes its appearance, I will desire you to accept of a copy. I am, &c.

LETTER CLI.

DEAR ——, THIS letter will come to your hands, as the blessings of the everlasting gospel are offered to our souls, without money and without price.

Be under no concern about the report you mention; it gives me not one moment's uneasiness. We have acted, I trust, as faithful stewards of our Master in heaven; and if he approves, how very insignificant is the censure of men! And what, ah, what is a little misrepresentation, or a few lashes from tattling tongues, compared with those cruel mockings which our divine and dying Redeemer bore!

You are, I find, as I too often am, in poor Peter's condition, when our Lord addressed him with that tender rebuke, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Wherefore indeed do we doubt? Is he not an all-sufficient Saviour? Is not his death a complete atonement, sufficient to take away the sins of a whole world? Is not his righteousness a perfect righteousness, able to justify even the most ungodly? Does not his Godhead impart an infinite dignity to both? rendering them more powerful to save than millions, unnumbered millions of sins are to destroy?

Is he not a willing Saviour? How willing was Joseph to give the good of the land of Egypt to his aged father! How willing was Jonathan to screen his beloved David from Saul's wrath! How willing is an indulgent parent to deal out bread to his hungry child! Equally willing, abundantly more willing is Christ to give himself to our souls, to reconcile us to his Almighty Father, to fit us for his kingdom, and take us to his glory. A parent does not chuse to die for his child; Jonathan never spilt his

blood for David, nor did Joseph lay down his life for that good old man Jacob. But this, all this, the Lord Jesus Christ freely undertook, freely underwent for us. What could he do more to assure us of his love? Let us contemplate the story of his bitter, bitter passion. Let us view him prostrate, in an agony of sorrow, on the cold ground; extended, with racking torture, on the accursed tree; laid, all pale and mangled with wounds, in the gloomy sepulchre: And sure we shall have a stronger proof of Christ's willingness to save us, than the testimony of ten thousand ministers preaching on earth, or of ten thousand angels speaking from heaven.

Is he not a faithful Saviour? Having loved his own, he loveth them even unto the end. As his eyes never slumber, nor sleep, so his care for his people is never intermitted; he has written their names on the palms of his hands, and their eternal interests are ever before him; he will never, never, never leave nor forsake them; no, not in any circumstance, nor on any account. They are his peculiar treasure, and the ransom of his own dear life; they are the recompense for all his sufferings, and are to be the jewels in his mediatorial crown; therefore they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hand. Neither life, nor death, nor things present, nor things to come, shall be able to separate them from his love, from his bosom, from his heart. "Happy art thou, O Israel! who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord? who is the shield of thy help, and the sword of thy excellency. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms; surely then thou mayest dwell in safety," Deut. xxxiii. 27, &c. Are we unworthy sinners? We readily own it, and oh that we may deeply feel it! But did not Christ chuse to converse with publicans and sinners? Did he not come to seek and to save that which was lost? The same spirit which actuated him on earth, he retains now he is exalted into heaven; let not therefore our deplorable vileness be our hinderance, but our incitement to

apply to the ever-gracious Friend of sinners. Indeed, if we were not sinners, we should not be proper objects for the Saviour. "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick:" for such he made his soul an offering, and for such he brought in everlasting righteousness: he makes intercession, not for the righteous, but for transgressors; and those that are afar off, in rebellion and apostasy, are brought nigh; nigh to God, and home to heaven, by the blood of Christ.

May these considerations sink into our hearts, and be made the seed of a lively, growing, and joyful faith! And "may the Lord direct" us both (as we both groan in this tabernacle, and are burdened) "into the love of God, and the patient waiting for of Jesus!" when this languishing, this corruptible body will lie down in peace, and rest in hope; and the soul, delivered from every conflict, cleansed from every stain, will be ever, for ever with the Lord. Amen and amen, says yours, &c.

LETTER CLII.

Weston-Favell, Dec. 15. 1755.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I RETURN you my best thanks for sending me a copy of so smart and sensible a letter, which came to me very a-propos; and which I think is so likely to do good in this disputatious age, that I wish it was printed in some of the magazines and public papers. I am much obliged to you for your kind caution against my being drawn into a controversy, particularly by the very warm and overbearing Mr ——, who is now grown impatient of the least contradiction, and far from being a desirable companion or correspondent.

Controversy is as much my aversion as it can be yours; for where that begins, religion too often ends; and I shall not enter the lists, I promise you, with any one, unless I am absolutely necessitated to it. But if I am compelled to appear in print on

such an occasion, I shall endeavour to pay due regard to Solomon's excellent advice, viz. "A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger," Prov. xv. 1. Instead of exasperating my adversary by cutting reprehensions, I will, if possible, constrain him, by a candid and respectful treatment, to moderate his temper; and, by a coercive propriety of arguments, persuade him to relinquish such tenets as I think erroneous.

God grant that I may never behave with an indecent resentment, how great soever may be the provocation of my gainsayers; but that, in all my writings and conversations, I may avoid the hasty spirit, lest I injure my own peace of mind, and disgrace my profession as a Christian and a minister.

It is a rule with me always to speak well of the good qualities even of bad men, especially when others are censuring them with an unmerciful severity; and I could wish that every controversialist would learn so much candour, as to put the best construction on his opponent's book, and to embrace what was in general good in it, however he might doubt or censure some *particular* opinions of the contending author.

To live peaceably with all men, is my earnest desire and my daily prayer; and in order to do this, I am more and more convinced of the necessity of candour, humility, and a conscientious regard to the example of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I am, my dear friend, affectionately and inviolably yours.

A copy of the letter above-mentioned, never before printed.

DEAR SIR,—I HAVE a strong and settled aversion to all matter of dispute, in things that relate to a message of perfect peace and love. The kingdom of God is no more opinion, than it is meat and drink; and argumentation can have little to do, where a new heart, and a right spirit, is the business or work to be performed.

If we prevail in our disputes, (though I believe there is not a single instance in which either of the antagonists ever condescended publicly to own himself in the wrong), our adversaries then become baffled worldlings; if they prevail, then they become worldlings triumphant. When we deal much in disputes, we soil our souls, and endanger the temper of meekness and love, which we are so frequently enjoined to cultivate, and which are the very badge of Christianity.

As for amicable disputes in religion, it is as errant cant as an amicable suit at law. A dispute about the sacrament as naturally removes the mind out of its state of perfect charity, as a quarrel about a whore. The subject alters nothing; it is the temper of mind wherewith we handle these matters that defiles the man; and it is morally impossible to meddle to any purpose, without having the mind disordered.

St Paul was plainly of the same opinion, when he wrote thus to Timothy; "If any man consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, and surmises, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself;" 1 Tim. vi. 3—5.

This is the constant case of all the disputers in the gospel itself. The more they argued, the further they were always from the point; insomuch that even those who are said to believe on Christ, at the beginning of the chapter of dispute, before the end of it take up stones to cast at him.

In short, till a man be a Christian in some measure, he has neither ability, nor any right in nature to talk about it. It is more absurd than a controversy between a fish and a fowl, about the best and most commodious element to breathe in.

The peace and purity of our own minds, is of more value than of every other endowment. For my own part, I had rather be able to bear patiently the nick-name of fool, or madman, than to become famous for all the wisdom and prudence which the world knows how to commend and esteem.

In this poverty of spirit, I would heartily entreat all my friends earnestly to seek after that love and peace, which is only to be found in the face or similitude of our dear Master, the Lord Jesus Christ. The want of this most amiable and Christian disposition in some eminent professors, for I never admired a rough and boisterous zeal, has often startled and chagrined him who is, dear sir, yours very sincerely, R. W.

P. S.—We may talk what we will about religion, it is nothing less than a divine temper. What is short of this is *prating* about religion, and that is all. I meet with many doctrinal Christians, who are very dabs at chapter and verse, and yet very bond-slaves to earth and self. Spiritual Christians (which are the only true ones) are almost as scarce as phœnixes.

LETTER CLIII.

Saturday morning.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—LET me exhort you to live as on the borders of eternity, and often to reflect where the late fall from your horse might have hurried you. Eternity is at hand. "He that cometh will come, and will not tarry." O that your soul may prosper! for without that, what are all the riches, pleasures, and honours of this earth? But it cannot prosper, unless the world be under foot, and your affections fixed on Jesus. What besides him, my dear friend, deserves a thought? And how tenderly has he dealt with us, notwithstanding all our ingratitude and provocations? I can say no more than I have said to you; but I pity you, and I pray for

you, that you may conquer this fear of man. I wish you would every day, for the next month, read some part of Professor Franck's Nicodemus, or, The Fear of Man. Dr —— told me he had a great regard for you, and wished you would set your face as a flint; exert your lively talents to promote the gospel, and confess the Lord Jesus boldly before men on every proper occasion: and when they talk obscenely, or take the Lord's name in vain, you ought genteelly to reprove them, or leave the company. This would be acting like a Christian! But while you are thus silent, meally-mouthed, stand so much upon your politeness, and have such a fear of being censured by worldly-minded people, you may take my word for it, you will do very little good, and be a stranger to the comfort and peace which others, who stick closer to Christ, daily experience; that comfortable peace of God, which (as Archbishop Secker finely observes, page 132 of his Nine Sermons) is that sense of being in friendship with him, that feeling of comfort and joy flowing from him, which passeth all understanding; exceeds the conception of those who have not experienced it, and will exceed hereafter the present conceptions of those who have. Adieu, my dear friend. Think well on what the Archbishop has so pathetically described, and then meditate on this alarming text, and reconcile it with your own pusillanimous conduct, which you miscall prudence: "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with his holy angels," Mark viii. 38. Once more, adieu! Remember that this is the declaration of the Lord who bought us with his blood, and suffered the unknown agonies of crucifixion to save you, and yours very sincerely.

P. S.—When people come to visit me, they expect to hear of Christ; and few come to Weston but those to whom such discourse is agreeable, nor do I desir

the company of any others. Talking of Christ is my touchstone, to see whether a person is worth my acquaintance. If you was once to take this method, you will tell me, perhaps, that such and such a one will abuse you, and all the principal gentlemen will ridicule and forsake you. And what then? You are much better without them. In their stead you will have the esteem and friendship of those who love our Lord Jesus in sincerity; and Christ himself will be in the midst, who has laid up for you, and all such as love his appearing, a crown of righteousness. Has this consideration no weight with my dear friend? Do not let me apply to you what saint Paul says of Demas to Timothy, chap. iv. 10. "Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world." Read the cxixth Psalm, and see whether you and your worldly-wise company have the spirit of the Psalmist. He, though a king, delighted to talk of God. He not only talked of him, observe, but delighted to do it; and it was pain and grief to him to forbear. Psal. xxxix. 3.

LETTER CLIV.

Saturday morning.

DEAR SIR,—IN reply to your question, "Why so many learned and very clever men in all worldly affairs, should treat religion with so much indifference, and remain unaffected by every argument that can be urged to rouse them from such a state of delusion?" I send you my opinion in a few words, viz. "Because they do not pray for the assistance* of the Holy Spirit." And I send you an answer more at large, extracted from a book of the celebrated Dr Bates, which I was lately reading, entitled, "THE SOVEREIGN AND FINAL HAPPINESS OF MAN, with the effectual means to obtain it."†

* See Christ's own words, Luke xi. 13. which the generality of mankind disregard; no wonder, then, the world should lie so much in darkness, and be thus dead to vital religion.

† See Dr Bates's Works, folio, p. 466.

"The efficacious influence," says the Doctor, "of the Holy Spirit, is requisite to change the WILL, that, with a free and full consent, OUR WILL may desire and prosecute the spiritual, eternal good. Without this, the conviction of the mind is not powerful enough to convert the soul from the love of the world to chuse heaven. There may be an enlightened conscience without a renewed heart. Though the JUDGMENT assents that God is the supreme good; yet till the heart be circumcised, and the sensuality of the affections taken away, divine love (which directs our life to God as our blessed end) can never possess it.

"If men had a sensible and strong assurance of the eternal state hereafter; if all those who lived godly in a visible manner ascended with Elias to heaven; and if all who continued in their sins visibly descended into hell (as Corah and his company were swallowed up alive by the earth before the Israelites); if men could hear the joyful exultations of the saints above, and their high praises of God; then hear the desperate cries and deep complaints of the damned; nay, if one, according to the desire of the rich man, was sent from the doleful regions below, and with his fiery tongue should preach a sermon on those torments, not describing them at a distance, but by a sensible demonstration in himself; yet THIS ALONE would not be sufficient to draw off men's hearts from the deceitful and transitory happiness of this world, and to fasten them on the perfect and eternal happiness in the next. Indeed, they could not then indulge their vices so securely; but yet they would be strangers to the life of God, such an inveterate alienation of heart is in men from real holiness: for till the quickening Spirit of God (by a directing persuasive light, that represents the truth and goodness of spiritual things) transforms the soul, and makes it spiritual in its valuations and affections, it is inwardly averse from grace and glory.

"How earnestly therefore ought we all TO PRAY

that this Holy Spirit may direct our hearts to the love of God, and to the patient waiting for of Christ Jesus, when he shall come to be glorified in his faithful servants, and admired in all them that believe!"

In another place, Dr Bates expresses himself in these very momentous terms: "Worldly men, when death is near, are not so much affected with the loss of the crown of glory, and the kingdom of heaven, as with their leaving the present world, and its vanities. This makes death intolerably bitter. In short, till the love of God inflames and purifies the heart, the fruition of his glory is not esteemed nor desired."

Your question will be still further answered, by considering thoroughly two tracts, wrote by Professor Franck; one of which is entitled, A short Introduction to the practice of the Christian Religion; and the other is entitled, Nicodemus, or, A treatise against the Fear of Man; wherein the causes and sad effects thereof are briefly described, with some remedies against it, dedicated to the honourable society for reformation of manners.

And now having mentioned Professor Franck, and his treatise against the fear of man, I cannot conclude without observing, that I think him one of the most eminent Christians, and most extraordinary men I ever heard of, as his Pietas Hallensis, which I read with admiration and deep humility, sufficiently demonstrates; and had I been a member of the society for reformation of manners, when the dedication of his Nicodemus had been presented to them, I should have made a motion to have had an hundred pounds expended in a proper distribution of that most important book, as there can be no material reformation till the fear of man is removed; and as nothing can be better calculated to extirpate such fear, and promote all the other laudable ends of the society. I am, dear sir, yours, &c.

P. S.—The title of the book I recommended to your son, please to tell him, was Henry's Pleasantness of a Religious Life. The author designed it particularly for young people; and in my conversation with them, I generally mention it. Indeed, I am the more solicitous of having it put into their hands, as they are too apt to look upon religion in a gloomy view, considering it as destructive of every enjoyment.

LETTER CLV.

Weston-Favell, Feb. 22.

My dear Friend,—The three volumes of Theron and Aspasio desire you first to accept them, then freely to animadvert upon them; and above all, to implore the blessing of God for them. I think, when people's sentiments differ so excessively as Mr ———'s and mine, it is best to be at a distance. O may we all be kept close to our divine Head; and, in a little time, that which is imperfect will be done away. We shall see him as he is, and know as we are known. I hope you prosper in your health, and are blessed in your ministerial labours. The book you inquire after, which Mr —— saw in my study window at Weston, and described to you as a well thumbed Lilliputian of two or three inches high, was written by one Mr Bogatzky, a German; in which language it passed nineteen editions, from which it is now translated, and entitled, "The Golden Treasury for the Children of God, whose treasure and hearts are in heaven;" containing select texts of the Bible, with practical observations in prose and verse, for every day in the year. It is pretty well thumbed, for there is rarely a day passes that I do not make use of it; and particularly when I am so languid as to be incapable of attending to my usual studies. The author very properly calls it "A Golden Treasury for the Children of God," who esteem the word of God more than gold, and

much fine gold, and from which they may be daily supplied with proper advice and relief in all manner of spiritual necessities, as thousands have happily experienced already. The verses are elegant, and edifying on most of the subjects; and it was his earnest desire and prayer, that the Lord, in his infinite goodness, would please to bless his endeavours to the good of many souls, and to the glory of his holy name. Mr Bogatzky observes judiciously, that it is not to be expected that a performance of this nature will suit the taste of those who unhappily mistake mere outward morality for true Christianity, and go no farther than natural reason and strength will carry them: but such as either have, or desire to have, a real experience of the kingdom of God in their souls, will find much in it to the awakening, comforting, and encouraging their hearts in the right way.

That we may know, and ever continue in that right way, is, my dear friend, the frequent and ardent prayer of your affectionate brother in Christ.

LETTER CLVI.

Wednesday morning.

DEAR SIR,—THE grievance you complain of, is, like many other grievances, irremediable; for, according to the old proverb, What is every one's business, is no one's. It is the same in numberless instances. How many turnpikes are erected, where the money taken will scarce defray the expense of the gates; and where the roads neither are, nor ever will be mended, and consequently they are nuisances instead of benefits? yet our nobility and members of parliament pass frequently through such turnpikes, complain of the grievance, but take no pains to redress it. And even in an affair of the highest consequence, how negligent is the community? I mean, in the long expected reformation of our Liturgy; in which, excellent as it is upon the whole, there are

some passages so justly exceptionable, that every bishop in the kingdom will tell you he wishes to have them expunged; and yet, I know not for what political or timid reasons, it continues just as it did. Had our first reformers been thus indolent, we still had been papists. Our laws are daily complained of, and might most certainly be abridged to the great benefit of the nation; this is allowed by every individual; but the parliament, you see, will not exert themselves in bringing this important affair to pass.

I have often wondered, that in this age of humanity, (for such with all its faults it certainly is), while infirmaries are erecting in different parts of the kingdom, public bridges building, and large collections making for charitable uses, there should be no societies established for redressing grievances. To found such kind of societies, would be truly laudable and highly beneficial. May God of his infinite goodness and unerring wisdom, put it into the hearts of the active, the benevolent, and the powerful, to set in good earnest about the institution of societies for the redressing our grievances; some for public, and others for private grievances. Were such once established, what a world of good might be done! Then the fatherless, the widow, and the injured, would have substantial friends always at hand, who would rescue them from their oppressors, by taking them under their own protection, and defending their cause out of the subscription fund. From these funds likewise, the expense of procuring useful acts of parliament, or of getting ineffectual ones amended or repealed, might be defrayed.

I know you will be pleased to hear that Mr —— has lately wrote very seriously to Mr —— about his religious concerns, and pressed him strongly "to DETERMINE (as his expression was), and set about religion in good earnest." "Pray, dear sir," said he in one part of his letter, "take care, and do not hurry away life. Give that affair a serious thought;

I am sure it is worth it. I wish you well, (sorry am I to say I think) better than perhaps you wish yourself. I should be glad to be mistaken. Would to God I could persuade you resolutely to fall in love with religion, and espouse its cause with all your interest, and with all your might. Was that once and thoroughly to be the case, what an instrument might not YOU be, in the hand of God, to rouse men from their lethargy; to animate them in the pursuit of their own eternal welfare; and to encourage their zeal for that of others? Oh! sir, a man with your capacity, your fortune, your opportunities, what could there be too hard for him, except himself? By your irresistible arguments and spirited behaviour, you knock down others on every occasion, and carry almost every point you undertake; why do not you knock down yourself? *Aude sapere, incipe.*

"What conscience dictates to be done,
Or warns you not to do,
This, as your hell, with horror shun,
That, as your heaven, pursue."
POPE's Universal Prayer.

In another part of his letter he thus interrogated Mr ——. "Will not every wise man frequently ask himself some such questions as these? Am I, or am I not in the right road? How long shall I halt between two opinions? Is not to-day certain, and to-morrow uncertain? Am I ashamed of being religious? Have I courage to stand it out against God and not against the world? Do I take proper care of my children's religious principles? If I destroy myself, shall I destroy my offspring too, and eternally?"

Towards the conclusion he added, "You have recommended several books to me, let me recommend Rymer's Representation of Revealed Religion to you; though, if I was to advise Mr ——, it should not be TO READ, but TO DETERMINE; resolutely and unalterably TO DETERMINE to be a religious man. You want no instructions, and the time of life with you

is gone a great way. Some people, I can tell you, suspect you for a Deist; if you are so, I then ask, Do you act devoutly on your own principles? Do you pray to God daily? This every Deist will allow to be necessary; and, till you have habituated your mind to prayer, I shall have little expectations of doing you that important service, which you must be sensible by my writing this letter I am very desirous of doing, as far as in me lies. The rest must be left to a superior agency, I mean the operation of God's Holy Spirit on your heart."

No answer has yet been returned by Mr —— to this letter. I believe he is puzzled how to act. He cannot well pass it by in silence; and to give any thing under his hand on so interesting a subject as religion, will be to a man of his turn very ineligible.

You see by the papers, that our great wit is dead. Is it not a little remarkable, that so long before his death he should be deprived of his senses? deprived of them at the very time he was about writing a most pernicious book, which, I am told, he intended to have published with this ludicrous title, viz. "The Memoirs of the Rev. Mr Jephtha Quixote, Saint-Errant; the true and undoubted son of the renowned Don Quixote, Knight-Errant; who inherits all his father's virtues." The design of which was to burlesque things sacred, and to set in a ridiculous light some of the most exemplary Christians, under the notion of saint-errantry. This would have been a most malicious piece of wit; and being the production of so celebrated a genius, would have spread like wildfire, pregnant with infinite mischief; for, as Horace has justly remarked,

> "For ridicule shall frequently prevail,
> And cut the knot when graver reasons fail.
>
> FRANCIS' *Hor.*

When you reflect on this and other attempts to discourage good men, and to render religion contemptible in the eyes of worldlings, are you not apt to say with the Psalmist, "The Lord that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn?" Psal. ii. 4. He, the

unseen, directs the whole by his wise providence; turneth men's hearts as seemeth good unto him; and in his hands are the appointments of life and death. To his guidance and to his protection I commend you, my dear sir, and yours very sincerely.

LETTER CLVII.

Weston, 1756.

DEAR SIR,—I CONFESS I am covetous, and, like covetous people, unreasonable; I was in hope of receiving another favour from your pen, before I troubled you with a fresh solicitation. But an affair has lately happened, or rather a project has started in my mind, which I will lay before you. On Sunday last a neighbouring clergyman sent me for my perusal, a sermon preached by Dr T——, before the House of Commons, on the late * public fast. When I perused it, and saw not a single mention of Christ, nor a single hint of an evangelical nature, I was surprised and grieved; and so much the more, as it was preached by one of the most celebrated divines in the kingdom, and before the whole kingdom convened in their representatives. I thought it was a pity, that such a notorious slight, put upon our most glorious Redeemer, should pass without animadversions. I could not forbear wishing that the Lord would enable me, even me, (the least and weakest in my heavenly Father's house), to bear my testimony for Jesus who was crucified. I therefore conceived some thoughts of publishing a sermon preached at Weston, upon a subject somewhat similar to his; for though mine is designedly plain, and destitute of the polite Doctor's embellishments, yet it has more of Christ and his gospel. I also apprehend, if to this were prefixed or subjoined some remarks upon the Doctor's performance, it might not be unseasonable nor unprofitable. Now, my dear friend, if you approve the design, would you draw up some remarks upon the Doctor's discourse, while I am endeavour-

* The public fast in February 1756.

ing to retrieve my sermon from a few hints, which I happened on that occasion to put down in shorthand? I will own to you, my heart almost trembles at the prospect of appearing in print against so eminent a man. And if you do not think it proper to be my helper and abettor, I must drop the design. May the Lord Jesus, whose honour is concerned, whose blood and righteousness, whose spirit and grace have been disregarded, and treated as ciphers; may he direct your determination, fructify your invention, give you all knowledge and all utterance! What think you of this method of proceeding? Making remarks upon the evangelical passages; pointing out the places where an opportunity offered of enlarging upon gospel topics; exemplifying this gospel manner, and shewing that it would be no prejudice, but give infinite weight and force to the argument. But I leave all to the blessed God, and my dear friend. Your last, I think, is a most masterly piece of controversy, for which I am your debtor. May you now be enabled to outdo yourself. The subject and the occasion are of the last importance: if you are inclined to exert yourself, pray let it be in the courtly manner. Your last pen was dipt in vinegar, let this be dipt in oil.

My sermon was on that text, Ezek. xviii. 27. I shall wait, with incessant prayer to him whose name is WONDERFUL, COUNSELLOR, till I receive your answer; and am most affectionately yours, &c.

LETTER CLVIII.

[Mr Hervey's friend, on considering the proposal in the preceding letter, wrote the following, and addressed it to Dr T——, the preacher of the fast sermon in 1756, on Jer. xviii. 7, 8. It is here printed, as the observations therein contained may possibly be in some measure productive of the good which Mr Hervey intended by such like remarks.*]

REVEREND SIR,—SOME time ago was put into my hands a sermon of yours, on Jer. xviii. 7, 8.

* See Preface to the Letters, Vol. V.

preached before the honourable House of Commons on the day of the late public fast; wherein I thought I saw some very material omissions and mistakes, which I feared might hinder the success of your ingenious performance; and therefore, as I would neither have you to labour in vain, nor the best use of such alarming calls of Divine Providence neglected, I could not but give you the trouble of a letter upon this occasion.

Nothing can be more proper, at such seasons, than serious discourses upon repentance and reformation. Times of affliction are most likely to be times of reflection; and when it pleases the Most High thus to open the heart, it is then the time for his servants to sow the good seed of his word. To prepare men for this, God's judgments fly swift as the light. To prepare men for this, he hews by his prophets, and slays by the word of his mouth: and happy, eternally happy, are those who are influenced thereby to return from their evil ways, and to make their ways and their doings good: for thus runs the divine promise, "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy; if that nation against whom I have pronounced this, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them," Jer. xviii. 7, 8.

Such is God's gracious declaration, which no gospel minister can read, but it must remind him of two things: First, that this promise is made in Christ Jesus, and therefore can belong to none but those who forsake their sins, and return unto God by him: Then, this return from evil must be accomplished through the grace and Spirit of Christ. And,

First, The mention of this, and every other promise in the book of God, must remind the gospel minister that it is made in Christ Jesus. St Paul hath assured us, that "all the promises of God in him are yea" (made), "and in him amen" (confirmed); and if all the promises of God are made and

confirmed in him, then this, as one, must be made in him. The Redeemer himself has informed us, that "he is the way, and the truth, and the life," and that "no man can come unto the Father but by him." But to turn from evil, and to come unto the Father, are terms of the same import. Besides, we know that it is only through Jesus Christ that we have peace with God, and that it is only through Jesus Christ that God has reconciled the world to himself. Can two then walk together except they are agreed? Can God sheath the sword of his justice before he is reconciled to us? If not, how can he repent of the evil that he thought to do unto us? And if he repents not of the evil which he thought to do unto us, where is our interest in the promise? But what need of any more words, when it is most evident that it is the Son of God who here speaks by the prophet? The same person promises mercy, who had threatened to destroy with the severest judgments: Now we know that "the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son; that all men should honour the Son, as they honour the Father." It is very plain then, that all who return from evil, must return by Christ; they must return with his price in their hands, and his robe upon their backs; and then, and not till then, they are safe, safe for time and eternity.

Again, when the gospel minister reads this gracious promise, he will remember that such a returning from evil must be accomplished through the grace and Spirit of Christ. How can we, who are not sufficient of ourselves to think a good thought of ourselves, think of returning to God and holiness? Can the captive, who is in love with his chains, long for liberty? Can the sinner, who is fond of his sins, desire to relinquish them? No; it is as possible for the Ethiopian to change his skin, or the leopard his spots, as for us, who are accustomed to do evil, to learn to do well. Nay, far more possible; for to accomplish this, they need only to change their hue;

but before we can attain to holiness, we must change our nature; we must "make ourselves a new heart and a new spirit," Ezek. xviii. 31.; we must quit the grave, and arise from the dead, and who is sufficient for these things? Therefore the Master says, "No man can come unto me, except the Father, which has sent me, draw him." And again, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and have ordained you to bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: For without me ye can do nothing." And his apostles assert, that "by grace we are saved through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God;" that every grace is the fruit of his Spirit, of whose fulness we have received, and grace for grace; and that "we are created *anew* unto good works, which God had before ordained, that we should walk in them."

Now, sir, are these the true sayings of God? are these the very words of our Lord and his apostles? Then, undoubtedly, to refuse them is to refuse him who speaks from heaven: and if so, how comes it to pass, that you have unhappily forgot to take notice of these things upon this solemn occasion? God promises security to all who forsake their sins, and return unto him in Jesus Christ; and yet Jesus Christ is never mentioned in your sermon. Without divine grace, and the sanctifying operations of the Holy Spirit, we can do nothing; and yet there we hear nothing of divine grace, or the Holy Spirit. Joab, ready to take Rabbah, the royal city of the Ammonites, so ordered the campaign that his master David might have the honour of the victory; but here is a Christian minister, who attacks a citadel of human corruption, and never so much as once thinks of Christ, through whom he must conquer. Here is a Christian minister, who, leaving the lively oracles, undertakes spiritual wickednesses with the carnal weapons of a Tully and Demosthenes. Mistake me not, I speak not against oratory as such; but if a Roman or a Greek philosopher, who had never heard

of Christ, can say as much against the vices of the age, as you can, who have from your infancy been educated in the Christian religion; what say you more than others? Is not this too much to slight that bleeding, dying Lamb of God, who alone can take away the sin of the world?

But the slight put upon our Master's words is not all: your not taking notice of these things has unhappily led you into mistakes that are utterly inconsistent with his undertaking. You call upon us, "by every act of humiliation and repentance, to deserve the protection of Heaven;" and throughout your whole discourse you labour hard to fix our hopes upon this basis, and our after obedience. But can the sincerest repentance, or the deepest humiliation, deserve the favour of God, and the remittance of punishment? If so, then fallen Adam might have broken in pieces the chains of eternal death, in which he was holden; and then, what need of shedding the blood of the promised seed? what need of such a sacrifice to appease God, if he was already appeased, or could be appeased by the relentings of man? Briefly, if the death of Christ was necessary to purchase eternal redemption for us, then our repentance and humiliation can never deserve the divine favour.

Nor can our after obedience procure such protection. Perfect obedience is a debt continually due from every creature as such; and the payment of a debt due now, can never be a compensation for the non-payment of arrears: nor can the most exact payment of what is due from one's self, be esteemed the least part of payment of what is due from another; and therefore, where the debt is obedience, as all creatures are bound to obey at all times, none but a God can pay off the score of any one delinquent. This is a tremendous consideration, even supposing true repentance, and a thorough reformation, were wholly in our own power; but when, as sinners, we are entirely "without strength," Rom. v. 6. 8.; when (as I have already observed) these gifts are perfectly

dependent upon grace, and the good Spirit of God; surely to talk of deserving the favour of Heaven by them, must be extremely absurd. Nor is it only extremely absurd, but extremely dangerous; as it places the merit of works higher than ever the Papists placed it, and is utterly inconsistent with the humble genius of the Protestant religion.

But your neglect of taking proper notice of these things, not only leads you to disregard the express sayings of our Lord, and to nullify his work, but to heal the wounds of the daughter of God's people slightly. You complain of our "profaneness and immorality; of our profligacy and unjust opposition to lawful authority; of our disregard to decency and good manners, as well as to the laws of our country; of that unlawful pursuit of pleasure, that luxury and extravagance, which insensibly preys upon the constitution, debases the sense, and corrupts the morals of our people." And these are evils that you ought to complain of; they are the sure signs of a declining consumptive state, and can never be enough lamented. But then, you never touch upon that root of bitterness, which bears this gall and wormwood; you say nothing of our *unbelief*, which keeps us at a distance from God, from whom we must receive every good and perfect gift; you say nothing of *faith*, without which it is impossible to please him, to turn from evil, or return to him. Nor do you take the least notice of our *enmity to the blessed Jesus*, and his holy gospel; of that *proneness to rebellion* and naughtiness of heart, from whence proceeds every evil thought, and word, and work. These things you ought to have remembered, and not to have forgotten the other.

Had you remarked upon these evils, in the moral view you have taken of our national vices, it would naturally have led you to point out suitable remedies. You must then have persuaded us to labour after an union with Christ, the fountain of grace, by faith; and this radical union with him would have produced

a moral union, and have transformed us into his likeness: where faith had been implanted, love would have flowed; and where love had flowed, there must have been ready and cheerful obedience; for the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and faith unfeigned. But without these gracious habits internally wrought, what will all the outward reformation in the world do for us? Have you not read of the Pharisees? did not these people keep clean the outside of the cup and the platter? Far from being guilty of any scandalous immorality, they prayed in the streets, made broad their phylacteries, fasted twice a-week, and gave tithes of all that they possessed: yet were their inward parts so filthy, that they finally became obnoxious to a judgment ten thousand times worse than what has befallen the unhappy inhabitants of Lisbon. Let us not deceive ourselves; neither outward reformation nor outward morality are sufficient; neither outward professions nor outward duties will make a man a Christian. The King's daughter is all glorious *within*, as well as *without*; and if we belong to the Redeemer, we must be sanctified by him both in soul, and body, and spirit.

If you would reform the world, PREACH THE GOSPEL. The gospel contains the only motives that can possibly prevail upon any to embrace it. People may talk of the amiableness of the divine Being, and the charms of virtue, thereby to allure us to return to the one, and to embrace the other; but without a true faith in the promises of pardon and acceptance, true repentance can never be attained; and a free and gracious pardon and acceptance is no where promised, but in the Lord Jesus Christ. The goodness of God freely offering pardon and peace, must lead us back to him, or we approach him no more. Earthquakes, famine, pestilence, or any other evils, have their use only as they discover to us our present condition, and greatly enhance the offered kindness: but we love God, because he first loved us; we love

Jesus Christ, because he obeyed and died for us; and his great love, thus manifested, does not urge, but constrain us to love him again; "because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." These are "the cords of a man, and the bands of love," wherewith we are drawn to our heavenly Father. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins;" and if God so loved us, surely we ought to love him again, and to testify our love by a suitable obedience. When no creature (as I have hinted) could furnish a righteousness that might be imputed to us, who can but stand amazed, that the Father should send his only begotten Son to obey in our stead? When no creature could bear the wrath of an offended God, and by dying overcome death, who can but stand amazed, that the Son of God should be sent to suffer and to die, that we might live through him? Who can but stand amazed, that the Son of God should take our nature upon himself, that he might thus obey and die for us? How can we behold him thus dying for us, and not die to that sin for which he died? When love so unprecedented speaks so loud, who can but hear, and wonder, and return to the Lord?

What I have said, I think, plainly shews that your discourse might have been far more evangelical; and as plainly shews what superior motives to repentance and reformation would have occurred, if it had been so. So that, humbly recommending my remarks to your serious consideration, I might here have concluded my letter: but as you allow that the late earthquakes "have hitherto been the merciful warnings of a kind and good Providence, to dispose us to bear the rod; and to consider, with that awe which becomes us, the hand which hath appointed it;" a few eclaircissements upon one of the lessons which

you have advanced under that head become absolutely necessary, lest, by mistaking the case, we should lose the benefit of our neighbours' afflictions.

You recommend upon this occasion, "our guarding ourselves against any hard censures, which a reflection upon these extraordinary calamities encourages in minds too readily disposed to judge with severity;" and conclude, "that it is certain that we have no right to determine what are the particular intentions of Providence in this dispensation." But certainly we have a right to determine that such punishments are inflicted because of sin: else how do they (in your own words) "speak to us the language of the divine displeasure?" else how can they be considered as punishments to correct some, and to warn others? else how can they be considered as the louder calls of anger; or of what use to bring us home to ourselves? This you must grant, or you pull down all that you have before builded, and make yourself a trespasser. I allow that we have no right to conclude these unhappy people to be greater sinners than ourselves, because of their greater sufferings. This would lead us pharisaically to cajole ourselves in our iniquities, rather than to take warning by others; yet we are allowed to look upon them as very great offenders. Our Saviour does not reprove his disciples, for thinking those Galileans whose blood (Luke xiii. 2.) Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices, to be very great sinners; but for thinking them to be greater sinners than themselves, which is indeed a temper of mind utterly inconsistent with true repentance.

We are allowed then to suppose the Portuguese to be great sinners, and that the Lisbon earthquake was a punishment inflicted for sin; and if we can discover any thing in their conduct that might tend to bring down this divine judgment upon them, it will be our wisdom to take warning by it, and carefully to avoid it as a fatal snare; and surely we may see some things in them, which God has, in all ages, punished with the most severe chastisement. As,—

First, Idolatry. It is impossible but that you, sir, must have heard of the stupid profaneness and idolatry of these people; of their mock processions, and barbarous mimicry of their Redeemer's sufferings, such as was a scandal to human nature, and such as never tarnished the most profane rites of Heathenism. Such fopperies, this horrible punishment should caution us carefully to avoid; and to avoid every means that would lead us into them. It should make us carefully abide by the gospel of Christ, which is the power of God to salvation to every one that believes; and wherein is revealed the righteousness of God from faith to faith. It should make us careful to live up to it, lest, for neglecting so great salvation, God should give us up to strong delusions, to believe such lies, and to worship and serve the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.

Secondly, Persecution. We all know, that at Lisbon the barbarous Inquisition reigned in all its horrors, and that thousands have there fallen a sacrifice to it, whose blood has long cried aloud for vengeance; and we know that persecutors have been most severely punished in all ages; so that, taught by this dreadful judgment, we should carefully avoid this crime—a crime of so deep a dye, that in its highest stage, when it strikes at the truth as such, it becomes irremissible, and can never be forgiven either in this world or in that which is to come. I allow, that these people are connected to us by every tie but that of religion; but this of itself constitutes so vast a difference, that whenever we are disposed to speak most favourably of their failings, and attribute them to the prejudices of education, or the weakness of human judgment, we should still remember, that we are Protestants, and they were Papists; and indeed, to us, as Protestants and Christians, there is something in this divine judgment so very remarkable, that, if rightly considered, it may greatly confirm us in both.

As Protestants, we all look for the destruction of antichrist and his kingdom; and here we behold a city, whose unequalled trade in gold, and silver, and precious stones, was a proper type of that spiritual merchandise so many hundred years vended by her mother Rome; like whom, she was built upon seven hills; like whom, as a most obedient daughter, she was a nest of idolaters and persecutors! And as she was so like her mother in every thing, we have all the reason in the world to think, that Rome, like Lisbon, shall one day be punished. Most remarkable it is, that on the day which she had abused to rob the eternal God of his honour, and to give it to the whole host of heaven; on the day which she had abused in shedding the blood of thousands; on that very day God came down to hold his *auto da fé*, and her own blood was required. Thus, when her mother Rome shall say, "I sit as a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow; in that very day shall her plagues come, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burnt with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her."

As Christians, we all look and wait for the coming of our Lord unto judgment, and therefore should pay a special regard to every token of his approach. He himself has told us, that, before his coming, "there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth, distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." When therefore we see any such things come to pass, we should lift up our heads, for our redemption draws nigh. Nor need we to fear, if Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, if we are rooted and grounded in love, though the heavens and the earth fly away, and their place be found no more; for the Lord of Hosts is with us, and Jesus Christ is our refuge. In whom I am, reverend sir, your sincere well-wisher, &c.

LETTER CLIX.

DEAR AND REVEREND SIR,—YOU need no apology for delaying your answer to my letter. You have a precedent to plead, which must, if not satisfy, yet strike me dumb; but I propose, if the Lord assist, to be more punctual for the future in acknowledging the favours I receive from my valuable and valued correspondents; among whom I shall always reckon Mr ——.

I am much obliged for your very just and very important remarks. They give me such an idea of your knowledge in the things of Christ, and your acquaintance with experimental religion, that I must beg leave to lay before you the plan which I have sketched out for my Treatise on Gospel Holiness; with an earnest request, that you will rigorously examine it, and freely pass your judgment upon it; suggesting, wherever it is improper, the means of rectifying it; wherever it is defective, a method for completing it.

THE PLAN.

PLEASURE and happiness of Christ's religion. We must partake of the comforts of the gospel, before we can be fitted to practise the duties of the law. Theron, oppressed with fears on account of his numerous sins, discouraged with doubts on account of his imperfect obedience, the cordials of the gospel are readministered with some additional spirit and strength. Holiness, gospel holiness, its nature, necessity, excellency. The endowments necessary to fit us for the practice of holiness; a persuasion of our reconciliation to God, the hope of everlasting happiness, and an assured expectation of grace sufficient for us. The grand efficient of holiness, the blessed Spirit; the principal instrument, faith. This renews the dispute concerning the assurance of faith. Objections to it stated, discussed, answer-

ed. Holiness more particularly delineated in its several branches, and deduced from, or founded upon evangelical principles; such as, "I beseech you by the mercies of God: Ye are bought with a price: Ye are the temples of the living God: God hath forgiven you," &c. All these privileges, though not hereditary, yet indefeasible; or the final perseverance of believers. This eminently conducive to holiness. The Scriptures, prayer, Lord's supper, when mixed with faith, are effectual means of holiness. Our friends part, and renew their epistolary correspondence. Theron, desirous to glorify the God of his salvation, asks advice concerning the best method of family-worship, educating children, instructing servants, and edifying his acquaintance. On each of these particulars Aspasio satisfies his inquiry; enlarges on the subject of education, especially the education of daughters, as that seems to be most neglected, or the proper manner of conducting it least understood. *Letter on the covenant of grace;* comprising the substance, and being a kind of recapitulation of the preceding volumes. *Letter on the way of living by faith in the Son of God, or the way of reducing all the gospel doctrines to suitable practice.* Aspasio seized with a sudden and fatal illness. His sentiments and behaviour in his last moments.

This, dear sir, is my rough draught. Apply the compasses and plummet; examine it with your rule and line. Improve my plan; assist me, with your advice and prayers, to execute the work; and may the great Master-builder enable me to bring forth the top-stone, for the honour of his holy name, and for the edification of his chosen people. I am, dear sir, with unfeigned affection, your brother in Christ.

N. B.—As Mr Hervey did not live to finish his plan, and as he was himself apprehensive that he should not, he desired, in his preface to Marshall

on Sanctification, that Marshall might be considered as a supplement to Theron and Aspasio, and as a kind of substitute for what he intended to write on the same subject, according to the plan here proposed. His words are, "I do by these presents depute Mr Marshall to supply my lack of service." See Recommendatory Letter, at the end of Vol. IV.

LETTER CLX.

February 12.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I WILL take a hundred of Jenks's Every Man's Ready Companion; for my mind is not altered since I promised this, nor my charity purse drained. It is a useful book to give away.

I am glad Jenks's Meditations sell, and I hope the Lord will make them a blessing to the reader: it is pity they cannot be comprised in less than two volumes octavo.

Does Mr —— want amusement? Let him take your friend Dr Young's advice:

Retire and read his Bible to be gay.

Does Mrs —— want it? You should teach her to delight in God, and to rejoice in Christ Jesus. A certain gentlewoman in Miles'-lane, whom you once reproved, has been taught to find her consolation, not in the entertainments of the stage, but in the assured hopes of heaven.

Have you given so and so to the poor? Ask your heart, whether you gave out of love to your dying Saviour? Was this the motive? It would then be universally influential; and you would think you could never do enough for his honour.

If an earthquake should happen, ask Mr ——, (that advocate for the theatre), if he would like to be found in the play-house, and go from the boxes, or pit, to the great tribunal? Indeed, indeed, the stage is indefensible.

Thanks for delivering my message. I wish you a safe return, and the continual guidance of Heaven. Yours most cordially, &c.

My messenger waits, pardon haste.

LETTER CLXI.

MADAM,—I AM pleased not a little to hear a lady of your fine sense and blooming years declare, That an inquiry relating to everlasting salvation "has taken up much of her thoughts." Let me entreat you to go on, and imitate that excellent woman, whose panegyric is uttered by wisdom and truth itself; "Mary hath chosen that better part, which shall not be taken from her."

You inquire, "Whether the elect of God have not an inward assurance that they shall be saved?" Your casuist takes leave to answer the question, by asking another: Why should not you and I, madam, have this assurance? Is it not a blessing intended for Christians in general? "We know," says the apostle, "that we are passed from death unto life." He says not, I and some eminent saints, but, "we;" including those believers to whom he wrote, those among whom he preached, and all those who hereafter should believe through his word.

Is not this a most desirable knowledge? On the other hand, can any thing be more afflicting than a state of suspense with regard to this all-important affair? To be in suspense whether my final lot will fall in the regions of endless misery, or the mansions of eternal glory? Insupportable! Can it be the will of our most indulgent Creator, that we should spend our days in this sad uncertainty, and distressing anxiety? Impossible!

But have we a warrant for this assurance? We have the best of warrants, the gift of God. If your papa gives you a pair of diamond ear-rings, or, (which, rightly improved, will be much more ornamental) a neatly printed Bible; do not you look upon

this as a sufficient warrant to call these presents your own? Do not you rest fully assured, that, by virtue of your parent's gift, they are your unquestionable property? Perhaps you will say, Where has God Almighty done any thing like this? where has he given salvation or life eternal to me? Be pleased to consult 1 John v. 11. and you will find an answer, which, I hope, will prove perfectly satisfactory, and highly delightful.

Is this spoken to me? To you, madam; to the young ladies of your acquaintance, and to every one that reads it. Life eternal is given, just as the manna was given in the wilderness. The manna, that each hungry Israelite might gather and eat it: Life eternal, that every poor sinner may receive and enjoy it.—But I have no merit, nothing to deserve it. Then you have just as much as the all-gracious God requires. Without money and without price, is his bountiful declaration. Freely, and abstracted from all deserts, are his gracious terms. You have no merit, madam, and I have less than none. But has our divinely excellent Redeemer nothing meritorious? For his sake, this magnificent and glorious gift is conferred. Not we ourselves, but Jesus Christ the righteous has obtained eternal redemption for us.

May I then assuredly believe, that God gives eternal life to me? May you glorify God's truth? may you glorify his grace? may you glorify the death and obedience of his beloved Son? If so, then you may, you ought, it is your privilege and your duty to believe, that God Almighty freely gives to you eternal life.

When you receive this gift, look upon it as your portion; live in the most comfortable expectation of it; relying on nothing valuable in yourself, but depending entirely upon the faithful promise of him who cannot lie. Then you will feel your heart inclined to love your most adorable Benefactor, then you will study to please him in all your conversation,

then you will be truly holy. All which is, with great sincerity, wished by, amiable Miss ——, your most obedient servant, &c.

LETTER CLXII.

DEAR SIR,—I KEEP Mr E——'s sermon for no other reason, than to prevent its going into other hands. I am ashamed, and sorry to see, that so celebrated a college as ——— should send out such a teacher of divinity. However, I must acknowledge one excellence in this gentleman. He acts prudently at least, in not overloading his pages with quotations from Scripture. Those stubborn pragmatical things might, perhaps, have risen up, stared him in the face, and confronted his notions. Mr ——, he rightly judges, will serve his turn much better than St Paul. Who is Philalethes Cestriensis? I see nothing valuable in his work, but what comes from the paper-mill and the printing-press; the paper and type are indeed very beautiful. What a wild proposition is that, page 124, namely, "That by faith in Jesus Christ, we understand the persuasion of the mind, that Jesus Christ was sent from God to redeem and to instruct mankind?" At this rate, the very devils are endued with the Spirit of our God: They believe with this persuasion of the mind, that the Christian revelation is true. Amidst so many palpable errors, who shall lead us into truth? He that is our gracious Master, and our wonderful Counsellor. Dear sir, let us look unto him, that he may, according to his promise, "guide us continually." Next to the holy word of God, let us study Marshall on Sanctification. For my part, I am never weary of reading that incomparable and most comfortable book.

Are you, dear sir, always thinking how good may be done? I say with David, "The Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of his servant!" 1 Chron. xxix. 18.

As the public service of our church is become such a formal lifeless thing, and as it is too generally executed by persons so dead to godliness in all their conversation, I question whether it will be *operæ pretium* to publish the exhortations to ministers, and to a devout attendance on the church service, which you propose. I should much rather see from your pen two or three lively and animating forms of morning and evening prayer, with clear and short directions how to pray aright, and a proper method of daily self-examination. This, printed in a halfpenny pamphlet, we might give away to any body, indeed to every body: And if one in twenty, or even one in fifty proved successful, our pains and expense would be abundantly recompensed. We should also hereby have some handle to lay hold on hypocritical, self-deceiving souls. We might say, Neighbour, have you got those prayers by heart? do you constantly use them, and examine yourself daily by those questions? Indeed, indeed, the exhortations you propose would only exasperate the clergy. It is dangerous to meddle with them or their proceedings. You are, I hope, in the way of duty, and that is the way of peace and safety. You may do much good, by dropping a word for Christ on proper occasions. You do not know how YOUR words are by the generality regarded; and it is impossible for tongue to tell how kindly our condescending Master will take the least attempts which proceed from the love of his name.

I intend soon to return Dr Watts on the Love of God. I wish it was reprinted. Pray did you ever read Dr Delaune's Sermons? he was president of St John's College, Oxford, and famed, I am told, for being a most accomplished gentleman. He really has more of the truth of the gospel in his twelve sermons, than in all the polite sermons I ever read in my life. For, my part, I set no store by our modern discourses; nay, I can hardly bear to read such insipid unevangelical harangues. Much rather

would I read an oration in Tully, or a dissertation of Seneca's.

When you can spare the Rev. Dr Browne's Estimate, and likewise his two sermons preached at the cathedral church of Carlisle in 1746, just favour me with a sight of them. I presume they will not tell me of Jesus which was crucified, therefore I shall soon be satisfied with their company; for though I may find some amusement from his fine style, and striking sentiments, yet I can find no consolation in any name, nor in any thing, but only in the grand propitiation and everlasting righteousness of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Thanks for Dr Akenside's Ode to the country gentlemen of England. He wrote this with a very good intention, and he is certainly a man of genius; but to me this ode reads somewhat flat: I fear it will not rouse and animate like the poems of Tyrtæus.*

This probably will find you returned in safety from your journey. When the journey of life is over, I hope we shall sit down together in everlasting rest; and see his glory, who endured the cross, and despised the shame. Till then, and then much more, shall I be most affectionately yours, &c.

LETTER CLXIII.

THANKS to my dear friend for the perusal of Dr Glynn's poem, entitled, The Day of Judgment. It is not void of elegance and spirit; but methinks it wants that energy and pathos, which, on so interesting and solemn an occasion, should awe, transport, and agitate our souls. But the great deficiency is, the neglect of Jesus Christ. He is, indeed, slightly mentioned, just at the close; but he should have made the distinguished figure throughout the whole piece. St Paul calls the day of judgment, the day

* Tyrtæus was a poet of Athens, who, by his poem pronounced at the head of the army, inspired the Spartans with so much courage and contempt of death, that they obtained a glorious victory.

of Christ. We must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ; then shall we behold the glorious appearing of the great God, even of our Saviour Jesus Christ. But not a glimpse of this is seen in Dr Glynn's poem.

Do you ask what I think of the polite ——'s sermon? It is a mere moral essay, not a sermon; it wants the light of Christ. To speak the truth, I think it an errant Cyclops.

> Monstrum horrendum, cui lumen ademptum.
>
> A hideous, eyeless monster. VIRGIL, ÆN. B. iii.

From such preachers, and such sermons, good Lord deliver us! Is any remedy for sins comparable to the blood, the righteousness, the intercession of a divine Redeemer? Pity, ten thousand pities, so great a man (for so the author really is) should not know, or should totally overlook the grand peculiarity of the gospel. It grieves me to think such unchristian doctrine should be thus propagated. If a fair opportunity offers, I would gladly bear my testimony against such enormous perversion of the gospel of Christ.

I cannot think the manuscript sermon which you have now sent me is of such distinguished excellence as to deserve a publication. It does not seem calculated either to alarm, to comfort, or impress. There is nothing of the orator, no searching application, no striking address. The preface is not so judicious as I could wish; it anticipates what is said under the following heads, and renders some part of them tautological. The text is not exhausted. Of several emphatical words no notice is taken. *I* say unto you, ye shall *in no case;* of the kingdom of heaven, nothing particular is said. Indeed, there is a hint or two in the conclusion referring to this subject; but too rambling, indistinct, and not with such a similarity to the text as might be observed. The preacher supposes all his hearers to be of the same character, and ranks them all in one class. A

practice which discerning people will not admire, and which is hardly consistent with the apostolical rule, rightly dividing the word of truth; or with our Lord's direction, to give each his portion suited to their respective states. I love Mr R—— as a worthy good man, but I decline the office of revising his sermon, because I am sensible I could not make it such as I should chuse to see printed. However, if it is printed, I heartily wish the blessing of the Lord may attend it; that true religion may be promoted, and immortal souls edified.

When the Pope is installed he is reminded of this most weighty truth, *Sancte Pater, dies æternitatis cogita.* Let me say, *Vir dilectissime, dies æternitatis cogita.* We were all pleased with your last conversation. It was like your book, and like yourself. Remember, my dear friend, when you are in company, that you have written a pious book, and do not invalidate all your exhortations to others by forgetting them in your own conversation. It is this, ah! it is this that destroys what we build, confirms people in lukewarmness, and does unspeakably more mischief than can be enumerated in this letter. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth," says St Paul, "but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers."

The paper you inquire after is lost in the *immane barathrum* of my loose papers. If ever it emerges, it shall be restored. May my friend's soul be not as the present state of the pastures and meads, but as a watered garden whose waters fail not!

I have perused Mr Witherspoon's Essay on Imputed Righteousness: may we every day experience that sanctifying efficacy on which his discourse turns. "Sanctify them," saith our Lord, "by thy truth." I thank you for your admonition. I will bear it in my memory, and may our divine Master enable me to observe it!

Oh for a candid spirit! It gives gracefulness t

our cause; it diminishes not the weight of our argument; and surely it does honour to the Christian character.

Thanks for Mr Mason's* Odes. Polished performances; but not equal, in my judgment, to his Isis, or his Monody on Pope. I think I could point out a defect or two in these poems, but nothing defective could I discern in those. It is a pity but gratitude to the supreme Benefactor actuated our hearts and guided our pens. The rich benefits of memory displayed by the elegant Mr Mason; and not one acknowledgment to the blessed Author of all! The poet shines, but where is the Christian? I am ever yours, &c.

LETTER CLXIV.

Tuesday morning.

DEAR SIR,—I SHOULD think my friendship very weak, and quite unfledged, if I could be offended with the freedom for which you apologize. Those who were anciently united in the bonds of Christian friendship had this generous sentiment for their motto, "*Amicorum omnia communia, præter uxores.*"†

I rejoice with you in the hopeful young gentleman's recovery; a pledge, I trust, of his eminent proficiency and extensive usefulness in the gospel cause.

I acquiesce entirely in Dr C——'s reasons; perhaps if there was much of the pure evangelical peculiarity in the recommendatory verses, it might be a forbidding circumstance to some readers.

Mr —— is very obliging; his cautions are very friendly. I will not speak so plainly to Mr W. as to him. I wish, if it be God's gracious will, that your little treatise may be like Dr Doddridge's works, acceptable to every reader. You see by the expressions I have taken the liberty to underline, that Mr

* Odes on Memory, Independency, Melancholy, and the Fate of Tyranny.

† Friends have every thing in common, except their wives.

—— sees the great truths of Christianity inverted, just as we see objects in a concave speculum. The good works, according to his scheme, are the recommending cause, and the blessed Redeemer only like the master of the ceremonies, merely to introduce them with a *good grace*. No, we have not so learned Christ; he is our righteousness, as well as our sanctification. We are accepted in the beloved: "In him shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and in him shall they glory." This is the epidemical mistake; but I hope God will send out his light and his truth, and rectify our misapprehensions. I dare say that amiable and accomplished gentleman, that exemplary and shining Christian, that very zealous and successful preacher, Mr T——n, will be highly pleased to receive the present of your little treatise; his good heart will exult to see your open acknowledgment of the Saviour whom he so dearly loves. I hope to see you, or hear from you, before you take your journey; and am, with increasing esteem and affection, most cordially yours, &c.

LETTER CLXV.

My dear Friend,—Your very kind present is come to our hands, and has made its appearance. You give me, as Theron says, καλόμβοι συναβοιων.

All I can say is, May the Lord supply your every need (both bodily and spiritual), according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus!

I am sorry my brother wrote so warm a letter to Mr A——y about his attempt to purchase the closes at Weston, which lie so commodious for us. The world's maxim is, Catch as catch can: But our Saviour's direction is, "Be anxious for nothing." Never fear but we shall make a shift without these closes to pass through the wilderness, and arrive at the heavenly Canaan. Were not your thoughts upon that eternal home when you attended Mr L——'s corpse to the tomb? One of the texts to which I

directed my people on Sunday was 2 Cor. v. 1. and which, I hope, the omnipresent God is now impressing on their consciences, and mixing with faith.

The elegant Paterculus I here return; and the evangelical Marshall I recommend to your repeated perusal. I wish you studied him more; for then you would like him better than you seem to do at present: you own there are many excellent directions in him; and those parts which you now think obscure would not appear so on a more intimate acquaintance with the author.

I am glad to hear such a character of Mr ——. I hope you will be an instrument in our Lord's hand of improving his valuable dispositions, of ripening the man of honour into the servant of Christ. I think Dr Akenside* has, if not spoiled his ode, much injured the dignity and beauty of his sentiments, by writing in Spenser's measure, and sometimes in his drawling style. "While he doth riot's orgies haply share." For an ode, where we expect all the harmony of numbers, and the highest polish of language, this manner surely is improper. I keep it a little longer, perhaps it may please better on the second reading.

I wish you and your lady much joy at Christmas, or rather all joy in Christ. He is come, he is come to judge the earth; to do that for enslaved and ruined mankind which the heroic judges of old did for Israel, to deliver them from bondage, and establish them in peace. Is not this the sense of Psalm xcvi. 11—13.? Ah! what pity that, while so many heroes are celebrated, "Jesus, the desire of nations," and "the brightness of his Father's glory," should be totally disregarded. Thou high and holy One, since authors of genius withhold the tribute of praise, glorify thy name by a worm, by impotence, by, &c.

* See Letter CLXII.

LETTER CLXVI.

Weston, June 7. 1756.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—Do you not take it amiss that I have answered your last kind letter no sooner? I have such a multiplicity of epistolary engagements, and such a poor pittance of strength, that I cannot be so punctual in my acknowledgments as my friends may expect, and as I myself wish.

You desired to see Mr Boyse's letter to me. I here enclose it; and it should have been sent to you earlier, but I could not find it amidst the confused heap of my papers till yesterday. I am very sorry to hear he is so ill, as there is little probability of expecting any thing further from his masterly pen. I really think his little poem entitled Deity, (in which he is not unmindful of the great Redeemer), is as useful and fine a piece of poetry * as most in the English language. I so much admire it, that I have insensibly as it were got it by heart. God grant that it may be influential on every reader.

I was reading the other day a curious book, written by Mr Fleming, and entitled, The fulfilling of the Scriptures complete; in which I met with a valuable quotation from Luther's letter to Melancthon, who was then in much anguish on the apparent hazards of those times. "If this," says Luther, "be the cause of God, and not of man, then all the burden should be cast on him. Why dost thou afflict and torment thyself, seeing God hath given his Son for us? Why do we tremble or fear? Will he forsake us in smaller things, who has given us so great a gift? Is Satan stronger than God? Should we fear the world, which Christ has overcome? If the cause we contend for be not the truth, let us change; but if the cause be holy and just, why do we not credit the promise and faithfulness of God?

* See Letter XXXIX.

It is certain Satan can reach no farther than this present life; but Christ reigneth for ever, under whose protection the truth now is; he will not fail to be with us unto the end. If he be not with us, I beseech you tell me where he shall be found? If we be not of his church, do you think that the bishop of Rome and our adversaries are of it? We are indeed sinners, but Christ is true, whose cause we have in hand; which he has hitherto maintained without our counsel, and so he will do unto the end." Mr Fleming then justly observes, that Luther rested on Christ, when all visible props broke under him.

What animating considerations are these under all the discouragements we may meet with in our ministerial labours? How does the work of the Lord prosper in your hand? May you be in this respect as a fruitful bough by the wall; may your people sit under your shadow with great delight, and your fruit be sweet unto them. I am yours, &c.

The following is a genuine copy of Mr BOYSE*'s Letter to Mr* HERVEY.*

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—FOR your tender admonitions and excellent advice, I am truly indebted to you; as they discover a generous and compassionate concern for my better part. I bless God, I have reason to hope that great work is not to do; for of all the marks of infatuation I know amongst men, there can be none equal to that of trusting to a death-bed repentance.

I do not pretend to vindicate my own conduct; nor can I ever forget the very Christian sense of my condition and misfortunes, which (notwithstanding all my misbehaviour) you have so pathetically expressed. The follies of my youth have furnished a plentiful harvest of reflection for my latter years. As I have been now for a long time in a manner buried from the world, so it has been my endeavour

* Mr Boyse died soon after he wrote this letter to Mr Hervey. His poem, entitled Deity, has passed through several editions.

to spend that time in lamenting my past errors, and in pursuing a course of life void of offence towards God and man.

I have learned to trust in God as my only portion; to bless him for his fatherly corrections, which have been much gentler than my demerit, and by which I have been taught to know him and myself; his infinite mercy and goodness; my own ingratitude and unworthiness: so that I may truly say with the returning prodigal, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and against thee, and am not worthy to be called thy son."

My health is in a very precarious state; and the greatest hopes of recovery I have (which are very small) arise from warm weather and the country air. I thank God I am absolutely resigned to his holy and blessed will. I have seen enough of the vanity and folly of earthly things, and how insufficient they are to satisfy the desires of an immortal soul. I am sensible of my own wretchedness and nothingness, and that my only hope of salvation is through that blessed Redeemer, who died to save lost sinners. This is my rock of hope against an approaching eternity.

May you long, sir, taste those true and unfading pleasures, which attend the practice of religion and virtue; and may you, by your shining example, be a means of turning many to righteousness. This is the sincere and ever-grateful wish of your most obliged and faithful servant, S. Boyse.

LETTER CLXVII.

Dear Sir,—The following is an extract of a letter, wrote by a young creature labouring under an incurable distemper, and languishing in the near approaches of death.

"I am at this time more happy than tongue can express. Never did I feel so much of the love of Christ shed abroad in my heart, as now. He has

given me full assurance that he has, out of love to my soul, cast all my sins behind his back, Isaiah xxxviii. 17. And oh! why need I fear death, when the sting is taken away? No; though I am a sinner, yet I have an advocate with the Father: and though, while I continue in this vile body, I fear I shall too often grieve him, yet is his love still the same; which makes me abhor myself, that ever I should sin against so kind, so compassionate a Saviour."

See by this how the poor receive, how the poor believe, and how the poor adorn the gospel of God our Saviour. This has indeed no great authority to dignify it, no flowers of eloquence to recommend it; nothing but the transparent sincerity, and the native sublimity of its piety. It breathes, however, the very spirit which I long to attain; and though it comes from a person in low life and of no education, yet I believe very few, even amongst the names of highest distinction for wit, genius, and learning, will be able, in the same circumstances, to exercise the same magnanimity of mind.—I am yours, &c.

LETTER CLXVIII.

Weston-Favell, Aug. 13. 1756.

DEAR SIR,—YESTERDAY I received the favour of your letter; was surprised to find you so near me, and grieved to hear of the occasion. Oh! that both of us may be enabled to cast all our care upon the Almighty! for surely he who gave, not an archangel, not a world, but himself, his most blessed self, for our sins, surely he careth for us.

Yes, dear sir, I think from my very heart, that the grand controversy which the King of heaven has with our nation, is for our prevailing contempt of his most adorable Son Jesus Christ; a gift, compared with which every thing in earth or sky, is lighter than dust upon the scale; a gift, by which an omnipotent and eternal God not only demonstrates, but

commands his love. Matchless then and unspeakable must it be! See how the prophet Isaiah exults and triumphs in this glorious gift. With an ardour of gratitude, and with a transport of delight, he cries, "To us a Child is born; to us a Son is given;" in whose person is a dignity, and in whose righteousness an efficacy, infinitely surpassing the power of thought. And should not such a gift be the darling topic of our conversation; be the avowed glory and the general joy of our nation? Yet, strange to tell! afflictive to observe! this divinely excellent gift is forgot, is rejected, or treated with the most cold indifference. Where are the people who mention it, or can bear to hear it mentioned in their company? Instead of being in raptures at the sound, are they not disgusted and chagrined? And does not God behold all this? Did he ever receive so horrid an affront, or is it possible for his creatures to act a more contumelious and disdainful part? But whither am I running? Pardon me, dear sir, pardon my full heart, my wounded heart, which has concurred to aggravate this crying iniquity. Oh! that its invariable language, for the future, may be, "God forbid that I should glory," or rejoice, or confide, "save in the cross of Christ Jesus my Lord:" in him I have pardon of my sins; in him I have peace with God; in him I have eternal life. Therefore, "Him first, him last, him midst, and without end,"* will I remember, acknowledge, celebrate.

Now you are come so far, could you not make a little farther excursion? Could you not favour us with your company at Weston? where you would find a plain house and a faithful heart open to receive you. I have no news from the literary world; and my orders to my bookseller are few. But having occasion to write, not long ago, to Amsterdam, I sent for all my favourite author's works: Witsius I mean; the polite and pious Witsius. My bookseller is reprinting in two volumes, at my desire, Jenks's

* Milton.

Meditations; which I propose to recommend by a prefatory address to the public. Let me soon hear from you, if I cannot see you. And may your letter be in every sense an evangelist.—Ever yours, &c.

LETTER CLXIX.

Weston-Favell, March 3. 1756.

DEAR SIR,—IN a preceding letter, I begged your solution of some scriptural difficulties. As you always used even to prevent my expectations, in a free and speedy communication of your valuable sentiments; and as I have not enjoyed that pleasure for a long season, I am under some apprehensions that either you are visited with sickness, or my dispatches have met with a miscarriage. I hope, after the receipt of this, you will find some way to relieve me from my perplexity.

Reading yesterday, Exod. xiv. methought there was some appearance of tautology in verse 7. Heb. If in either of the clauses we might render the word "BCC," by horsemen, this seeming impropriety would be avoided. It would also more exactly agree with "DCB VTDSHM," the 28th verse. Is not our method of translating verse 20. somewhat forced, and hardly reconcileable with the genius of the original language?

Hab. iii. 5. "LTGV LD." This sentence also embarrassed me a little. How does it, as translated in the English Bible, agree with the history? Is there any account, or any hint, that the pestilence went before the Lord, when he descended on Mount Sinai? There went indeed a wonderful word "DBD," το διαστελλομενον φωνη μεγαλη. Does this passage refer to the plagues inflicted on the Israelites for their murmuring and rebellion? I think not, because the sacred hymn appears calculated for the encouragement of the people, whereas this circumstance would rather depress their spirits. Does it point at the plagues and the vengeance executed on the Egyptians? This, I believe, is most probable, and perhaps affords us the true meaning of the pas-

sage. Pray, favour me, if you have health and leisure, with your opinion, which, I assure you, is highly valued, and always thankfully received by, dear sir, your obliged and affectionate friend, &c.

What precedes was written before the receipt of your last.

I thank you, dear sir, for your letter, and thank you doubly because it is long. I received it on coming from my Wednesday's evening lecture: have read one sheet, and entered upon the second, but am now called down to family prayer. I shall add no more, only let me desire you to favour me with the criticisms you mention. I beseech the blessed God to establish your health, and prolong your life, that you may enrich me and others with many of your letters, and much of your knowledge.

LETTER CLXX.

Saturday morning.

My dear Friend,—I congratulate you on the acceptance of your little tract, and the uncommon demand for it. *Inest sua gratia parvis*, is a maxim of more wisdom and weight than we easily apprehend. May the blessing of our Lord Jesus Christ accompany it, always and in all places! I must desire you to excuse my waiting upon you. The season is so rigorous, I am afraid to stir abroad. I question whether I shall have courage to venture to Collingtree to-morrow. You know I am one of the snail kind, both in travelling, reading, and writing. My thanks to Mr Fenwick; I have just peeped upon his work:* I fear it will be thought by the world too finely spun. You once asked my opinion concerning Dr Grey's last words of David, divided according to the metre. I had not then read it with due attention. I lately perused it very carefully, and am charmed with the importance of his correction and the beauty of the

* Thoughts on the Hebrew Titles of the Psalms, endeavouring to discover their meaning, and point out their use.

passage, as it stands amended by that judicious critic; though, I must own, I do not admire the alteration suggested by Bishop Sherlock, in his letter to Dr Grey. "A sun shall rise as the morning," seems to have very little spirit, and less propriety. Is it not bordering upon *idem per idem?* What is the morning, but the rising of the sun? ask your accurate friend's opinion. If the other passages of Scripture, mentioned by Dr Grey in the front of this little piece as what he soon intends to publish, are as valuably restored, and as elegantly interpreted as this, the suppression of them will be a great loss. I will, on your encouragement, go on with my book in my piddling way. Happy if my own heart may be impressed with the evangelical truths, even though they should reach, as handled by this pen, no farther. I had like to have forgot Mr ——'s letter; and if I had forgot it, you might justly wonder at my stupidity. What a man is he! sure the age does not produce a more genuine copy of his divine Master. What a letter has he wrote! what dignity of sentiment! what true greatness of soul! what openness of heart! what boldness of speech, and justness of reproof, sweetened with what love! tempered with what humility! How I love the excellent man! Was not your soul ashamed while you read it? and did not your heart burn within you, as the disciples' did when talking with Christ in their way to Emmaus?

I am really afraid to read Spenser's Fairy Queen. He is in fancy superior, perhaps, to every poet, yet so luscious in some of his representations, which I have casually dipped upon, that it is impossible, for ME at least, to advert to them without catching contagion. His pictures of this sort are drawn with a good design. He makes his heroes victors of the soft allurements. But, I believe, few minds are so case-hardened against sensual pleasure, as not to receive disadvantageous impressions. I am therefore determined never to look into it again, never to

gather the honey of poetry from the briers of contamination. "Flee temptation," is the advice of an inspired apostle, and I will pay the due regard to it. I am, dear sir, with great respect, your most obliged, and very affectionate servant, &c.

LETTER CLXXI.

Weston-Favell, Dec. 6. 1756.

SIR,—I RECEIVED your obliging and valuable present of the Scriptural Poems wrote by an American. It is an extraordinary performance, considering the disadvantageous circumstances under which the author laboured. A spirit of zeal and devotion animates the whole. There are, too, some elevated thoughts and fine lines in it, particularly in that part of his poems he entitles "Man's fall and exaltation, or the Christian triumph."

I hope the sale of it will answer your expectation; and recompense the cost you have bestowed in printing it so elegantly, and on so fine a paper. But be that as it may, you have my best wishes that it may become the darling of the public; and you have at the same time the sincere thanks of, sir, your obliged humble servant.

LETTER CLXXII.

DEAR SIR,—TELL our ingenious friend at ——, if I did not give a direct answer to his question, it was because he had stated it improperly. His manner was like making a raw apothecary's apprentice the proper judge of a doctor's bill. If such a chap should take upon him to say, Doctor, your language is unintelligible, your recipes are injudicious, what answer would you make? Some such answer must be made, even to Dr C—— and Mr O——, if they or Dr C—— maintain, or would insinuate, that the mystery of sanctification, as delineated by Marshall, is unintelligible and injudicious, merely

because *they* do not immediately discern its propriety. I own the third and fourth direction of Mr Marshall seem obscure; but this does not arise from any improper manner of treating the subjects, but from the mysterious nature of the subjects themselves.

This, says Dr C——, is my firm faith, "that, if we do well, we shall be accepted through the merits of Christ." I might ask the Doctor whether he does well? Dare he avow this, even before me his fellow-worm, and fellow-sinner? How then will he maintain the pretension before that infinitely pure God, in whose sight the very heavens are unclean? But I chuse to ask him, (what may seem less offensive), "has he never read of the righteousness of faith?" Rom. x. 6. Of being "made righteous by one man's obedience?" Rom. v. 19. Of "righteousness imputed without works?" Rom. iv. 6. Now I should be glad to learn, what the Holy Spirit means by these expressions? And if our worthy friend pleases to shew, how his faith can be made conformable to any one of these texts, I will undertake to demonstrate the conformity of my faith to them all. Ah! why should we hug a despicable rag, and reject a suit of beautiful apparel? The Lord Jesus enable us all to discern the things that are excellent!

Let me this Christmas wish you and Mrs —— all joy and peace in Christ Jesus. These are the true compliments of the season, and therefore sent by your true friend, &c.

LETTER CLXXIII.

Weston, Saturday morning.

Much I loved, and much I esteemed my dear friend before; but now, methinks, I love and esteem him more on account of his kind acceptance of my free admonitions. Do, my dear friend, let us remember how important the hours of our present life, and the moments of social intercourse are. Dr W—— of Worcester, who has a fine taste for painting, can,

though engaged in great business, paint, and talk now and then upon paintings; Dr C—— of St Albans, who has a fine genius for poetry, though amidst a variety of employs, can write, and give his sentiments on poetry; and why should not Dr S——, though in an equally large sphere of action, edify his acquaintance by his tongue and pen with some religious hints? This, I think, is his distinguishing talent; and, when he pleases, I am sure no man knows how to introduce Scripture better, or to converse in a more striking manner. Oh! that a stricture of it may run through, brighten, and dignify his temper, his business, his whole conversation.

You are perfectly right in esteeming those authors whose piety beams through all their pages. And for this very reason I esteem, admire, and embrace Jenks' Works, Marshall on Sanctification, and Witherspoon on the Imputed Righteousness of Christ; because nothing has so efficacious and benign an influence on true piety as their doctrines; nothing so sweetly calms the conscience, so thoroughly refines the affection, or, to say all in a word, so effectually sheds abroad the love of God in the heart.

I wish you and Mrs S—— abundance of comfort in Miss Sophia. It was said of one, Nabal is his name, and folly is with him, 1 Sam. xxv. 25. So I say of your infant daughter, Sophia is her name, and may wisdom be with her! even the *η ανωθεν σοφια*, "the wisdom from above," which St James so charmingly describes in chap. iii. 17. and not with her only, but with her parents, and with their truly affectionate friend.

LETTER CLXXIV.

Weston-Favell, July 26. 1756.

Now, my dear friend, I have procured your favourite author, Downham's Christian Warfare against the Devil, the World, and the Flesh. He is indeed a pleasing, perspicuous writer: the language, as you

observed, remarkably pure and correct; he is very experimental, and enters into the distresses of tempted souls; many things are sweet, comfortable, charming. Sometimes, I think, he draws a little veil over the grace of God, not suffering it to blaze out in its full lustre and glory. Do not you think he is somewhat inaccurate in stating the nature of justification? Lib. ii. chap. 50. "Justification," he says, "consisteth in two parts: the first, remission of our sins for the full satisfaction of Christ by his death and sufferings; the other, the imputation of his habitual and active righteousness." Should it not rather be, Justification consists of two parts: the first, remission of our sins; the second, being perfectly righteous in God's sight: and both these spring from the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the poor sinner.

I find from your manuscript it is your opinion, that the antediluvian sacrifices were slain by the sword of the cherubim planted and waved at the entrance of Eden. This is a very remarkable and very awful circumstance; and, if true, very worthy of particular notice. But what reasons have you, dear sir, for the support of this sentiment? Be so kind as to mention them at your leisure.

Mr P——, about a week after his return to Northamptonshire, gave me your letter. I fear he will become a prey to the allurements of the world. I believe he is not very zealous for the gospel of Christ. I am pretty sure he does not love the servants of our Lord; therefore I expect that, from this quarter, my character will soon be put under an eclipse; nor shall I be much disappointed if, by this incident, my new friend is put away from my sight. Thanks for your hint concerning my conduct; it is very seasonable, and shall be observed.

I have sometimes thought that the best, strongest proof of a future state of happiness occurring in the Old Testament, is deducible from the history of Enoch. "Enoch walked with God," was high in his favour, and had much communion with him: it is recorded

as a singular reward of his holy and exemplary life, that "he was not, for God took him." Now, if the ancient people of God had no notion of a future state of happiness, what strange apprehensions must they form concerning this instance of the divine procedure? At this rate, Jehovah must appear to punish in the most exemplary and dreadful manner his first and greatest favourite. Whereas, suppose them rooted in the belief of a much happier condition succeeding the present life, and the case is plain, and God is justified in his doings. Please to give me your opinion as to this argument.

I hope you are thinking of your new version of Psalm civ. which will be very agreeable, and, I hope, not a little edifying, to, dear sir, your much obliged and affectionate friend, &c.

P. S.—I here send you Mr Moses Browne's almost literal translation of Luther's most comfortable hymn, which is in very considerable esteem in the German church. *Zimmermannus de cognitionis Christi eminentia*, is a comment on it, and is now translating by Mr Browne at my desire.

LUTHER'S HYMN.

IN EIGHT PRACTICAL RULES.

I.

'Tis not too arduous an essay,
To tread resolved the gospel-way;
The sensual instinct to control,
And warm with purer fire the soul.
Nature may raise her fleshly strife,
Reluctant to the heavenly life;
Loath in a Saviour's death to share,
Her daily cross compell'd to bear:
But grace omnipotent, at length,
Shall arm the saint with saving strength;
Through the sharp war with aids attend,
And his long conflict sweetly end.

See *Zimmermannus*, page 5.

II.

Act but the infant's gentle part;
Give up to love thy willing heart:

No fondest parent's melting breast
Yearns, like thy God's, to make thee blest:
Taught its dear mother soon to know,
The tenderest babe his love can show;
Bid thy base servile fear retire,
This task no labour will require.

Zimmermannus, page 11.

III.

The Sovereign Father, good and kind,
Wants but to have his child resigned;
Wants but thy yielded heart (no more!)
With his large gifts of grace to store.
He to thy soul no anguish brings,
From thine own stubborn will it springs:
That foe but crucify, (thy bane!)
Nought shalt thou know of frowns or pain.

Zimmermannus, page 17.

IV.

Shake from thy soul o'erwhelmed, depress,
The encumbering load that galls her rest;
That wastes her strength in bondage vain;—
With courage break the enslaving chain.
Let prayer exert its conquering power;
Cry in thy tempted trembling hour,
"My God, my Father! save thy son!"——
'Tis heard,—and all thy fears are done.

Zimmermannus, page 32.

V.

Yet if (more earnest plaints to raise)
Thy God a while his aid delays,
Though you don't *now* his kind hand feel,
Thy grief let lenient patience heal.
Or if corruption's strength prevail,
And oft thy pilgrim footsteps fail;
Pray for his grace with louder cries,
So shalt thou cleansed and stronger rise.

Zimmermannus, page 43.

These next lines within brackets, do not belong to Luther's hymn, but are used by Zimmermannus, page 52. as an illustration of the preceding stanza.

[The faster hold my faith on Jesus takes,
His brighter glories on my spirit breaks.
If then to heaven I lift my votive hands,
Love's strongest flame my raptured soul expands.
Thee, Lord, she loves, and would with zeal forego
A thousand worlds, love dear as thine to know.]

Then Luther's hymn proceeds thus:

VI.

If haply still thy mental shade,
Dark as the midnight gloom be made,
On the sure faithful arm divine
Firm let thy fastening trust recline.
The gentlest sire, the best of friends,
To thee nor loss nor harm intends:
Though tost on a tempestuous main,
No wreck thy vessel shall sustain.
Should there remain of rescuing grace
No glimpse, no footstep left to trace;
Hear thy Lord's voice:—'Tis Jesus' will,
"Believe, thou poor dark pilgrim, still."

Zimmermannus, page 55.

VII.

Then thy sad night of terrors past,
(Though the dread season long may last),
Sweet light shall from the tranquil skies
Like a fair dawn before thee rise;
Then shall thy faith's bright grounds appear,
Thine eyes shall view salvation clear.
Be hence encouraged more, when tried,
On the best Father to confide:
Ah! from thy mind extirpate quite
The sickly films that cloud her sight.
See! of how rich a lot, how blest,
The true believer stands possest!

Zimmermannus, page 68.

These lines within the brackets do not belong to Luther's hymn, but are used by Zimmermannus as an illustration of the preceding stanza. See page 74.

[Loose from hard bonds, my God! a mind
In chains too fast, too strait confined:
I'm heal'd! set free! from sin made pure!
Thy blood, my Christ, has wrought the cure.
I feel a power my will control!
Quench thy long drought, my thirsty soul!
The living fountain now I've found,
Diffusing balmy streams around.]

Then Luther's hymn concludes with this eighth practical rule.

VIII.

Come, backward soul! to God resign;
Peace, his best blessing, shall be thine:

Boldly recumbent on his care,
Cast thy felt burdens ONLY THERE.

Zimmermannus, page 88.

LETTER CLXXV.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—THIS morning I wrote to my bookseller, and therein told him, that I think he need not be much concerned at the scurrilous treatment which the reviewers have bestowed on my edition of Jenks's * Meditations. It will injure their own character, and lessen their own credit; not depreciate the works of that excellent man. I do assure you, it gives me not the least concern. I do not covet reputation: I desire every day to be more and more dead to the honour that cometh of men. Yet it is my sincere opinion, that such very foul and very abusive language, would awaken in the generous reader a spirit of resentment. As a proof, I enclose a letter from Mr P——, a very ingenious young clergyman, whom I some time ago mentioned to you under this character. The letter, I think, will do him as much honour as it does me: it is fit to appear in print; but I would on no account take any such freedom with a private epistle. I would not have our friend in London give himself any manner of trouble to prevent any future instances of this kind of benevolence from the reviewers. I depend not on their favour, but on him whom heaven, and earth, and hell obey; who constrained even Balaam to say, "How shall I curse whom the Lord hath not cursed?" We are all obliged to my dear friend for interesting himself in our behalf; but we desire him not to take the trouble of writing on Tuesday, because it will be too late. The little closes are to be put up for sale on Monday, and A—— will, I suppose, outbid my brother; yet, if disappointed in this, blessed be God for a treasure in heaven that faileth not! an inheritance that is not perishable, but lasting as eter-

* See Mr Hervey's preface to this book, Vol. V.

nity; not tarnished, but free from every circumstance of alloy; not fading, but always in the fullest freshest bloom of perfection, glory, and joy.

Poor Mr H——r, I am informed, has almost lost his sight, is extremely ill; his life, it is thought, will follow his sight. Lord, that he and we may see by faith the Lord's Christ! Blessed be God, in Christ all fulness dwells, all fulness of merit and righteousness, of grace and salvation; and this is for the unworthy, for sinners, "for whoever will;" therefore, for my dear friend, and for his ever affectionate, &c.

LETTER CLXXVI.

Weston-Favell, Monday morning.

My dear Friend,—I am much obliged to you for your generous donation of thirty shillings to purchase five hundred of an Earnest Invitation to the Friends of the Established Church, &c.* I have put the money into the hands of one who loves the Lord Jesus in sincerity; and who will take care that the pamphlet is properly dispersed according to our desires. It is an excellent design: I daily beg of God to bless it; for what he vouchsafes to bless, will be blessed indeed.

Enclosed I send you a form of prayer, founded on the plan laid down in the Earnest Invitation, &c. It was transmitted to me last night by a very pious clergyman, who I believe was himself the author of it. You may get one of your sons to transcribe it, if you have not leisure enough to do it yourself; and permit such serious persons to take copies as you think will make a proper use of it.

I wish you that promise for your counsellor, which we read this morning at breakfast in Isaiah (chapter lviii. 11.) "The Lord shall guide thee continually." I am, my dear friend, ever yours, while, &c.

* An Earnest Invitation to the Friends of the Established Church to join with several of their brethren, clergy and laity, in setting apart one hour in the Sunday of every week for prayer and supplicatio especially during the present troublesome times.

[A solemn act of confession and intercession, suited to the plan of those London clergy and other friends to the Established Church, as specified in the Earnest Invitation, &c. requesting all the well-disposed Christians (laity as well as clergy) throughout this nation, to join with them in a solemn act of humiliation for one hour every Sunday evening, viz. from eight of the clock till nine, on account of their own sins and the sins of this nation, especially during these calamitous times, viz. in 1757.]

1. O BLESSED LORD, let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be at this time acceptable in thy sight as the incense, and let this now lifting up of my hands be a sweet-smelling sacrifice! Lord, hear my prayer, and let my cry come unto thee.

O most great and glorious God! just and terrible in thy judgments to all obstinate and rebellious sinners, but of infinite mercy to such as with true sorrow and hearty repentance turn unto thee; look down, I beseech thee, with mercy and compassion upon me, now presenting myself before thee, owning that I am not worthy so much as to lift up my eyes to the throne of thy glorious Majesty. O Lord, my sins are so many and so great, that it is owing to thy mercy alone that I have not been long since consumed, but yet have another opportunity of humbling myself before thee, and begging mercy for my own soul, who have so grievously sinned against thee. I confess, O Lord, what thou knowest already, but I confess it to manifest thy justice, and to glorify thy mercy, which has spared me so long: I confess and acknowledge, O Lord, that I brought a depraved and sinful nature into the world with me, from whence all my actual sins have flowed and proceeded, as impure streams from a polluted fountain. O blessed God, I beseech thee, for thy dear Son Jesus Christ's sake, to humble me, and that greatly, for this my original corruption! Lord, let me see it in the strongest light; and never give me rest and peace, till from my soul I cry out for, and rely upon, the unsinning obedience of my dear Redeemer Jesus Christ, and the assistance of the Spirit for deliverance

from it; and grant that this precious balm may be my cure, and restore me again to the image of my God!

O Lord, I have sinned against thee by wilful and actual sins; I have left undone those things which I ought to have done, and have done those things which I ought not to have done;—particularly by such, and such a sin.

[As it is taken for granted, that every one who uses this prayer has first of all strictly examined himself, and wrote down all the notorious sins, both of commission and omission, which he could recollect that he had been guilty of during the whole course of his life, it would here be proper for him to read over that catalogue of his offences very deliberately, that he may be deeply humbled, and truly penitent.]

O blessed God, I can give but a wretched account of myself. I cannot remember, I fear, the ten thousandth part of my offences. Lord save, or I perish; my crimes are intolerable and shameful, and my omissions as well as my commissions are innumerable. Oh, what shall I say unto thee, or what shall I do? Oh, thou preserver of men! I am so vile, that I cannot express it; so sinful, that I am hateful to myself, and much more abominable must I needs be in thy sight!

Oh, I have sinned, I have sinned! my sins are grown shameful, and aggravated to amazement! Lord! I can say no more; I am ashamed, I am confounded in thy presence!

But yet, O God, thou art the healer of our breaches, and the lifter up of our head; and I must not, I dare not despair. Thou hast opened a fountain for sin and for uncleanness, and therefore I am sure thou delightest not in the death of a sinner; and though my sins are great and numberless, as the sand which is upon the sea-shore, yet they are infinitely less than thy mercies, which thou hast revealed to all penitent and returning sinners in Jesus Christ!

For his sake, therefore, be pleased to look down into the dust, and lift up a poor helpless sinner from the dunghill! for Christ's sake, let me not perish in

my folly, nor be consumed in thy heavy displeasure! for Christ's sake, give me time and space to repent, and give me also power to do it by the assistance of thy blessed Spirit!

Support me with an holy hope; confirm me with an operative and lively faith; and kindle a bright and burning charity in my soul: give me patience in suffering, and severity in judging, and in condemning my sins! that judging myself, I may not be condemned of thee; that mourning for my sins, I may rejoice in thy pardon; that destroying my sins, I may live in righteousness; that denying my own will, I may always endeavour to perform thine; and that, by the assistance of thy blessed Spirit, I may overcome all carnal and spiritual wickedness. May I walk in thy light; may I delight in thy service; may I perfect my obedience; be wholly delivered, as well from the power of sin, as punishment of it; and so be for ever preserved from thy wrath, and at last pass on from a certain expectation to an actual enjoyment of the glories of thy kingdom, through Jesus Christ my blessed Lord and Saviour! Amen.

2. And now, Lord, as I have been confessing my own sins, and humbling myself before thee as a private and particular person, I think myself bound, in humility and duty, after the example of thy servant Daniel, to look upon myself in a still farther sinful light, viz. as an inhabitant of a profligate and rebellious nation; and so, like Daniel also, to confess the sins of my people! May I feel the concern of the Psalmist when he exclaimed, "Rivers of tears run down mine eyes, because men keep not thy law," Psalm cxix. 130. And oh! that my supplications, and the supplications of all those who at this appointed hour have agreed solemnly to seek thy face, and to confess their own sins, and the sins of the people of this land; O that they may meet with the same gracious acceptance with thee as Daniel did! O that the commandment may come forth at the beginning of our supplication, "to make an end of

our sins, and to make reconciliation for our iniquities, that thou mayest once more be our God, and we thy people!"

Let thy merciful ears, O God, therefore be open unto our prayers, and spare all those who confess their sins unto thee! that they whose consciences by sin are accused, by thy merciful pardon may be absolved, through Jesus Christ our Lord!

"O Lord, the great and faithful God, keeping covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments!" (Deut. vii. 9.) we have sinned, O Lord, we have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments; neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, nor to thy Son Jesus Christ, nor to his apostles, who in thy holy word have spoken unto our fathers and the people of the land.

O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of face as at this day, to our kings, to our princes, to our fathers, and to ourselves, because of the trespasses which we have trespassed against thee; yea, we have all as one man transgressed against thee, by departing from thee, and not obeying thy voice; therefore the curse is poured out upon us, and thou hast confirmed the word which thou hast spoken against us! Thou hast brought upon us many and sore evils, yet made we not our prayer before thee, that we might turn from our iniquity and understand thy truth.

But, O blessed Lord, to thee belong mercies and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against thee. O Lord, we confess our wickedness and are sorry for our sins; we beseech thee, therefore, according to all thy righteousness and all thy gracious promises, and for the sake of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from us! Bow down thine ear, O Lord, and hear; open thine eyes, O Lord, and see, and behold our miseries and our desolation! for we do not present our supplications

before thee trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies, and of the truth which thou hast shewed of old time to us thy servants: But thou art the same, whose property is always to have mercy; have mercy upon us, therefore, have mercy upon us, most merciful Father, for thy dear Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake; forgive us all that is past, and grant that we may ever hereafter serve thee in newness of life, to the honour and glory of thy name! And let the consideration of our sinfulness and unworthiness, and of thy manifold warnings to us, and long-sufferings towards us, increase in us true repentance, that iniquity may not be our destruction! and increase in us also more and more a lively faith and love, fruitful in all holy obedience, that thou mayest still continue thy favour, together with the light of thy gospel, to us and our posterity! and this we beg for thy dear Son Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator and Advocate.

3. And now I have here confessed to thee my own sins, and the sins of the people, I desire farther to offer up my prayers in behalf of all mankind, that both Jew and Gentile may believe in, and glorify thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent! Protect and prosper thy holy catholic church; preserve it pure in doctrine and worship; root out of it whatever is a scandal to thy most holy religion; unite its professors and enlarge its borders; especially bless that part of it in these nations to which I belong; and as, in thine infinite mercy, thou hast been pleased to vouchsafe us abundant illumination of thy gospel, be pleased to grant that by our sins we may not extinguish the light of it.

Inflame the ministers and stewards of thy mysteries with a lively and burning zeal for the conversion of souls. Impress it deeply upon them, that cursed is he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully; and be pleased, O Lord, to assist them with thy blessed Spirit, and to direct them to the use of such means as may be effectual to bring about, and accomplish that desirable and happy end.

Be pleased likewise to bless all those our dissenting brethren, of what denomination soever they be, who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity! Reconcile our hearts to them, and theirs to us! grant that there may be an end of those animosities, and bitter disputes, which have so long and so sadly disturbed the peace, and hindered the union of Protestants! and grant also, that there may be only this one holy contention between us, whether the ministers out of the established church, or they that are in it, shall labour most for the glory of our common Master, and for the salvation of those souls committed to their care, and for whom he shed his blood.

Bless, likewise, our Sovereign Lord King George, and all his royal family! make them pure and holy in their lives! raise up an active and vigorous spirit in their hearts, for the punishment and rooting out of wickedness and vice, and for the encouragement and maintenance of true religion among us.

And be pleased, O Lord, to give the spirit of wisdom to all his counsellors, and to the magistrates of all ranks through the nation, that they may be enabled faithfully to discharge that great trust which is reposed in them, to thy honour, and to the benefit and advantage of his Majesty and the nation!

Be pleased likewise to go forth with our fleets and armies! bless all their endeavours against our enemies, and give them success in the day of battle.

Have mercy upon all the afflicted members of thy church, whether in mind, body, or estate! Pity their condition, O Lord! pity it, and lay no more upon them than they are able to bear, but give them deliverance in thy good appointed time, if it be thy blessed will! Have compassion upon all that are in error, but sincerely seek the truth; on all that are engaged in sinful courses, and led captive by their lusts, that they may have grace and strength to break their bonds; and on all those who never pray for themselves! Open their eyes, O Lord, and melt their stony hearts; awaken them, though it be even with

thunder, to a sensible feeling of their sad condition; and, for thy mercy's sake, suffer them no longer to sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death; may they see before it be too late the danger and madness of thus living without God in the world.

4. Finally, O Lord, I desire to return thee my unfeigned praises and thanksgivings for the manifold expressions of thy goodness and loving-kindness to me and to all mankind! I bless thee for my creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life, and for all the helps and advantages which thou hast vouchsafed me for the obtaining a better; but above all, for thy astonishing love to mankind in Jesus Christ, for all that he hath done and suffered for us, and continues still to do for us by his powerful intercession at thy right hand! humbly beseeching thee, that I thy servant, together with all those who have lived and died in the faith of his holy name, may follow the example of his heavenly life, that finally with them I may be made a partaker of the merits of his obedience and death, in a joyful resurrection to everlasting life!

All these confessions, prayers, supplications, intercessions, and thanksgivings, I humbly put up to the throne of grace, in the name and words of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who, in compassion to our infirmities, hath taught us thus to pray: "Our Father," &c.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.

N. B.—The above prayer may be enlarged and improved as time and occasion shall offer; and it may not be improper to remind every Christian, that the first time he makes use of it, he ought to set apart at least half an hour for self-examination, and writing down the sins of which he finds himself guilty. The following Sundays he will reconsider what he has written, and thereby form a judgment what is his progress in, or deviation from, the path which leads to heaven. After having spent some Sunday

evenings in this devout exercise, he should be upon his guard lest he be tempted to leave it off. O may he never be tired of such a good work! the more he prays, the more he will have strength to persevere. It is humbly hoped, that all who read this will immediately purchase the Earnest Invitation, &c. the price of which, as has been before observed, is no more than a penny; and then, after having weighed it with the attention which a matter of this importance deserves, they will, to use the author's own words, "judge whether it be not a seasonable and a safe measure which we would persuade you to take; and you will take it, if you are indeed a friend to our present happy establishment in church and state. Your love for them will put you upon the doing every thing that lies in your power to serve them; and here you have a fair opportunity, of which, if you make use, it cannot but do you service, and may be a blessing to them. Pray for them at the appointed hour, (namely from eight to nine every Sunday evening). Determine, through God's assistance, that nothing shall hinder you from joining us. Break through all engagements, all hinderances, to meet at the throne of grace the Lord's people. [Consider that God knoweth his secret ones, and will reward them openly]. And moreover, for your encouragement, remember, that he who sitteth upon the throne is the GOD WHO HEARETH PRAYER, and who has invited you (Psal. l. 15.) to call upon him in the day of trouble; so will I hear thee, says he, and thou shalt praise me." What a comfortable promise is here to animate every one to make part of this praying congregation!

LETTER CLXXVII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I TRULY sympathize with you in all your calamities; but to be afflicted more or less, is the common lot of God's people; and it is frequently their fate to be exercised with frowning

providences in a remarkably grievous manner. Under such circumstances we should suggest soft hints of admonition, with the same friendly intention as actuated the prophet Jeremiah, when he addressed this exhortation to his countrymen, "Let us search and try our ways, and," if we are found delinquents, "turn again unto the Lord," Lam. iii. 4. We should likewise comfort each other by observing, that God, who heareth prayer, has bowels of everlasting compassion, and does not willingly afflict the sons of men; that this adorable God has given his all-glorious Son to be a bleeding sacrifice for our sins; and that if he withheld not his Son, *his only Son*, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things? all things that pertain to life and godliness;" to subsistence here, and salvation for ever. Prompted by the infinite benignity of his nature, and engaged by his inviolable promise, he never faileth those that seek him. O how ready is he to give his Holy Spirit! to give all happiness to those that with an humble sincerity will apply to him! infinitely more ready than we are to give our children a morsel of bread to save them from perishing with hunger. These are indeed comfortable considerations, and are the strongest reasons why we should continually be making our requests known unto him.

I fear Mr Sm—h is a very bad man, and too justly deserves the name you give him. Labourers, I am told, are distressed by his neglecting to pay them; which I can assure you very much grieves me, nor is it in my power to redress them. I wish it was; they should soon see what it is to have to do with one "who nameth the name of Christ," 2 Tim. ii. 19.

Please to lend me Dr Squire's Indifference for Religion Inexcusable. I mightily like the title of it. He bears so good a character, both as a scholar and a man, that I hope it will be an antidote against the fashionable and growing indifference to religion.

Did you ever see a shilling poem, entitled the Battle of the Sexes? It is wrote in the spirit of Spenser, and is indeed one of the prettiest things I ever met with. But it is very evident that the author has taken his plan from Fletcher's Purple Island.* The celebrated Pitt of New College, who translated Virgil and Vida, has wrote a complimentary copy of verses, which are prefixed; a specimen of which I have here selected to shew you the nature of it.

> What muse but yours so justly could display
> The embattled passions marshall'd in array?
> Bid the ranged appetites in order move,
> Give *lust* a figure, and a shape to *love?*
> To airy notions solid forms dispense!
> And make our *thoughts* the images of *sense!*
> Discover all this rational machine,
> And shew the movements, springs, and wheels within?

As I was looking yesterday at my preface to the new edition of Jenks's Meditations, I observed, in the catalogue of his works, that, either through my own or the printer's negligence, two little pieces are omitted: one of them is his Serious Thoughts on the Wonderful God; which is very useful in assisting us to form proper notions of the divine perfections; the other is his Glorious Victory of Chastity, exemplified in Joseph's hard conflict, and happy escape. It is pity that this little piece is not more regarded by parents, as it is perhaps the best thing of its size ever wrote on the subject, and ought to be put into the hands of all young people; for as St Augustine justly observes, "Inter omnia certamina Christianorum duriora sunt prælia castitatis; nam ibi continua pugna, et rara victoria."†

If another edition of Jenks's Meditations should be demanded, and if it should please God to take me to himself before that time, I here desire the favour of you to see that these two little tracts be inserted

* See Letter CCVI.

† The meaning of which is: "Amidst all the various and sharp encounters in the Christian warfare, the attacks on our chastity are perhaps the most formidable, as the combat is strenuous and lasting; a complete victory being rarely obtained."

in the catalogue of Mr Jenks's writings, given in the preface to that book by your ever affectionate, &c.

LETTER CLXXVIII.

Weston-Favell, April 28. 1757.

WHAT has my dear friend been speaking for the honour of HIM, who saved his life from destruction? How are you? how is your lady, after your great fright,* and greater deliverance? Calm now, I trust, and no emotions in your mind but of gratitude to the great Preserver of men, who kept all your bones, so that not one of them is broken.

Now, I hope, you will be steadily and uniformly serious. You see, God warns you, yet spares you. To others he has appointed such dangers as befell you yesterday, to be the messenger of death; to you he has designed them only as an admonition of love; hear then your PRESERVER's voice. Trifle no longer with Christ and his salvation; be zealous, I mean discreetly zealous, for your Saviour, and for that gospel, which you understand better than most of our clergymen. How can you refuse to speak boldly for such a Master, and to devote yourself to his service in earnest, who forgives all your backslidings, watches over you with such tender compassion, and *waits*, yea, *waits* to be *gracious unto you!*

My dear friend, may the Lord Jesus turn us both to himself, who is our refuge, our salvation, and all our hope; who should be our boast, our triumph, and all our joy.

I long to see your amiable friend the Reverend

* The gentleman was driving his wife in a one-horse chaise, when the horse suddenly took fright, and flung his hinder leg over one of the shafts, just by the side of a very deep ditch: being thus entangled, and a high-mettled horse, he kicked with all imaginable fury, and several times his hoofs came within a hair's breadth of their heads. They called in vain on their servant, who had loitered behind; and they must both have inevitably been dashed to pieces, had not the horse, by the violence of his kicking, broke the harness, bar, and shafts, and thus fortunately disentangled himself.

Mr Dyer's poem on the Fleece. I suppose he will make you a present of it. When you have done with it, please to send it me. I hear it is to be sold at five shillings, which I cannot afford to give for it.

In your last letter you asked me for two guineas out of my charity purse, for our very deserving and very distressed friend. Indeed it is quite exhausted; nay, I do not think I have a single guinea in the world, even for my own use; though I forbear every unnecessary expense, and want many of the little conveniencies of life, that I may be enabled to succour the worthy servants of Christ. I have agreed to go halves with Rivington in the profits of my book; and I always make it a maxim, not to give till I have gotten. Be just before you are generous, is your own rule too. If the Lord pleases to prosper my work, I will very readily communicate to the comfort of such worthy objects as you may think proper to recommend to the charity of, my dear friend, yours very affectionately.

LETTER CLXXIX.

Dear Sir,—Mr Moses Browne * has, I think, thirteen children. One is settled in the world; and a friend of his has taken another for his clerk, gratis. We propose to put out one of his daughters to some decent business, by which she may have the means of getting her livelihood. He has been at a great expense, poor man! by the sickness of his family. Your contribution on this occasion will be acceptable. Dr —— has offered to augment the collection; and Mr ——, I am sure, will readily add his charitable assistance, especially if you recommend the case.

* The Rev. Mr Moses Browne (the author of Sunday Thoughts, and various other pieces) is now vicar of Olney in Buckinghamshire, the revenue of which is about fifty pounds, being his only income, and he above fifty years old.

We are in daily expectation of our friend H. I wish you could make up the *triumvirate of the guests*. At all our social interviews, our news is fetched from the Bible; Christ is the monarch, and heaven the country, on which we discourse. O that I may be enabled to improve these precious opportunities! not be like Pharaoh's lean kine, destitute of growth, though crammed with plenty! My flock would have been peculiarly delighted to have heard your voice in the pulpit; they would have hung on your lips; and, I verily believe, the words would not have been in vain in the Lord. There is no expedient so effectual to warm our hearts, as an unremitted endeavour to awaken the love of a bleeding Saviour in the breast of others.

I am truly grieved at the account of yourself. You know who has said, "I will heal their backslidings, and love them freely;" and dare we, by giving way to unbelief, make the God of truth a liar? Hear the words of the Lord, spoken by Jeremiah, chap. iii. 12. "Return, thou backsliding Israel, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you; only acknowledge thine iniquities which thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God."

Recommend Jenks's Victory of Chastity to Mr ——, and tell him, that though the lusts of the flesh are inveterate enemies, yet three methods may be prescribed for a victory over them. 1. A believing application of the Redeemer's death. The saints in glory, once men of like passions with ourselves, overcame through the blood of the Lamb. He "bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead unto sin, might live unto righteousness." 2. An habitual reliance on the Spirit of God. "If ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Christ by his Spirit acts on our depraved, polluted hearts, as a refiner's fire, and as fuller's soap. 3. An improvement of the divine promises. God "has given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these we might be

partakers of a divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

These, tell Mr —— to lay up in his memory; on these let him meditate; and plead them before our heavenly Father in frequent, frequent prayer. And let him be of good comfort, the blessing of Gad will be his portion. "Gad, a troop shall overcome him, but he shall overcome at the last." See Gen. xlix. 19.

Our dear friend presents his love; and wishes you may be very zealous for the Lord God of hosts. You have constantly an interest in my best prayers, but I am utterly unworthy to approach the immaculate purity and infinite holiness of the great God; yet blessed be his adorable name for Jesus Christ. Oh let us fly to Christ! "Turn ye to this stronghold, ye prisoners of hope." Let us cast our every burden upon the Lord Redeemer; have access into the holiest through his precious blood; and trust in his ever-acceptable intercession; for he intercedes, delightful truth! he intercedes for *transgressors*. I am, dear sir, &c.

LETTER CLXXX.

Dear Sir,—Mr Hayward and Mr Pike's Cases of Conscience are printed in two volumes, the first of which I here send you. I return you Smollett's History of England, and West's Pindar, with thanks. How empty all these polite pieces appear, compared with the sacred page! May this delight our taste, for this alone can comfort our heart. What I proposed to write relating to the subject of Visiting on Sundays, (See Vol. V.) was executed the beginning of last week: Yet, to say the truth, I am in some measure backward to propagate and enforce it; because, till people begin to taste something of the love of God, and find delight in Christ Jesus, such truths, I doubt, will only startle, and make them dread religion as burdensome.

Thanks for the venison. We cannot dress it to-day. All my family are to be at court this morning. The King of heaven has sent positive orders, and will not excuse either man-servant or maid-servant. Will you not give us your company in the afternoon? When Mr —— performs the whole service at my church, I fancy you will not be disappointed nor unedified; he seems to have a ready utterance, a very good voice, and a fervent zeal for the honour of Christ: may the arrow of the gospel go forth from his lips as the lightning! I hope you will bring your wife with you; such lively preaching as I expect, may be a blessing to both of you. O that Christ may guide us with his counsel, and warm us with his love; make us useful in our generation, and meet for his heavenly kingdom!

Why does our friend talk of not accepting ——, because it is a paltry living? Surely he would not reckon that a paltry thing, which gave him an opportunity of preaching Christ, and winning souls. If he did, he would not be able to say, with a certain minister now in glory, "I seek not yours, but you." The blessed hope of that glory is enough, is enough: Lord, strengthen it, brighten it, increase it, ever more and more. O that ministers may work for their dying Lord, while they have health; remembering, that sickness may confine them to their chamber, and death will imprison them in the grave. God Almighty give us courage, that we may fight the good fight of faith; and prudence, that we may not dishonour our high calling. Ere long, eternity receives us, and then we rest from our labours; then we forget our transient toil, amidst innumerable ages of perfection, and glory, and joy. For all this, not unto us, O Lord Jesus, not unto us, but unto thy love, thy righteousness, thy intercession, be the praise!

What say you to my late well-meant admonition? You are not offended, I hope. We must be faithful to each other, or else how can we expect to meet with comfort at the great tribunal; to meet with transport amidst the angels of light?

I have not heard from Biddeford; as soon as I receive information, it shall be communicated to you. And may the Lord fulfil that promise to us both; "I will inform thee, and teach thee, in the way wherein thou shalt go."

Pray have you got Dr Armstrong's poem on Health? It is highly extolled by Mr Wharton, the translator of Virgil, as a most correct, and (which with him seems to comprehend all excellency) a classical performance. I should like to peep upon it by way of amusement; for as to the blessing it celebrates, I expect it not, till this vile body is made like unto Christ's glorious body. Blessed be God for this delightful hope: may it every day be brighter in you, and brighter in your most affectionate, &c.

LETTER CLXXXI.

My dear Friend,—Sincerest thanks for your benevolent offices; may they, through our great High-Priest, and in the incense of his atonement, go up as a memorial before God; not as a demand, (we may observe), not as a bill drawn upon Heaven, but only as a memorial.

I had a very restless night, tore almost to pieces by my cough. Strange! that these flimsy vessels can bear such violent straining! that none of them will burst, and let the battered soul slip away to her eternal rest in Christ!

Here are two sets of the Meditations, with which you may gratify some of your acquaintance. The Lord Jesus Christ grant that they may promote his glory. Do not you often wish, often pray, that the same blessed effect may be produced by your book? We authors should not be like the ostriches in the wilderness, cruel and forgetful of their young, Lam. iv. 3.

If you have Dr Grey's translation of Hawkins Browne's Latin poem on the Immortality of the Soul, favour me with the sight of it: it is a grand

subject; it is a glorious subject; and, when considered in connexion with Jesus Christ, it is a delightful subject. Oh! that it may incite us to aim, not at the things which are seen, for they are temporal; but at the things which are not seen, for they are eternal.

I have found the little treatise, entitled, Recovery from Sickness. It is one of the most pertinent and rational, the most animating and encouraging, that I have seen on the occasion. Few properer pieces, I think, can be put into a sick person's hand. May the Lord God, omnipotent and gracious, accompany it with his blessing!

I am always complaining; complaining of my poor body; but, I trust, more and more resigned to the unerring and gracious will of my Lord.

I beg, I entreat you, if you value the honour of the gospel, that you will dissuade those polite persons you mention, from coming to hear me to-morrow. My spirits sink more and more. I am visited with some returns of my hacking cough, perhaps I shall not be able to speak at all. Such disagreeable circumstances will only expose me, and create in them very unpleasing ideas of what I shall deliver. My imagination is gone. I am sensible my sermons are flat, and my voice spiritless. Why therefore should you bring persons of taste to see the nakedness of the land? The poor country people love me tenderly, and therefore bear with my infirmities; else I should no longer attempt to preach even before them. I am now unfit to appear in the pulpit.

I hope Dr Swan's journey will be blessed to the restoration and establishment of his health. I wish I may never forget the text on which he heard the minister of Weston preach: I wish we may all enjoy the blessing comprised and promised in it: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." Do not you, my dear friend, think of such things? talk of such things to your lady, and instruct your

children in such things? O! let us remember the Judge is at the door, and eternity is near. I heartily wish Mrs —— a speedy recovery, and a sanctified improvement of her affliction. See, my dear friend, how all flesh is grass; but Jesus and his great salvation endureth for ever: here is indeed an everlasting possession. The text particularly fit for me and for you to meditate on, (viz. Heb. i. 2, 3.) I will preach on next Sunday. Can any be more grand in itself, or more consolatory to us sinners?

How go you on? do you see any opening in the affair we last talked about? are you come to any determination? Remember him who sees, this very moment, all the consequences of every step we take; and who hath said, in tender compassion to our ignorance, "The Lord shall guide thee continually." Pray, beware of precipitate resolutions; *festina lente.* Whatever we do, whithersoever we go, may we say with the Psalmist, "This God is our God for ever and ever; he shall be our guide even unto death." My weak state of body dispirits my mind, and enervates my hand. Oh that I may be strong in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity! and not I only, but my dear friend, whose I am cordially and inviolably, while, &c.

LETTER CLXXXII.

DEAR SIR,—I SHOULD be glad to suggest any thing, either for your improvement or consolation. But what can I suggest while you entertain such hard thoughts of Christ, and will not be persuaded out of this strange notion, "That the curse of God has lighted on you, and will follow you to the grave?" Such a thought (and it must be taken up without any real foundation) not only renders you extremely miserable, but will blast all your future usefulness. Suppose you had rebelled against God, even in a more extraordinary degree than even your own imagination can paint; and suppose you was rejected by

him at the present; yet what says the apostle St James? chap. iv. 10. "Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, and he will lift you up."

As to the quotations from Mr ——'s letter to you, wherein he observes, with a kind of triumphant malignity, "That the devil had taken an advantage of you, in relation to some imprudent management in the affair at ——, &c. &c. &c. and dragged you (as he expresses it) through a horse-pond, dirtied and wet, to the great diversion of the spectators;" I ask, of what spectators? Of the worldly-minded only, and the envious, to whom your former flourishing state, as a first-rate Christian, was a constant and visible reproach; yet Christ (though you are now thus depressed) is still your friend, and will break Satan's teeth; and though dirty, will cleanse you; though wet, will receive and warm you.

Now let me put a question to you: Would you reject your child, because, when dressed in its best clothes, he had met with a like misfortune? Or suppose he had rambled out in the snow, and scratched himself with briers, and come to you bleeding and cold, would you turn him out of doors, when he claimed your pity? We do not know Christ well enough. How kind! how good he is to us! What is my kindness and compassion for you (on which you seem to place so high a value) in comparison of Christ's? Have I been nailed to the cross for you? Oh pray earnestly to HIM; for

> ——To Him, to Him, 'tis given,
> Passion, and care, and anguish to destroy;
> Through Him, soft peace and plenitude of joy
> Perpetual o'er the world redeem'd shall flow.
>
> PRIOR'S *Solomon.*

He has satisfied God for all your sins; he is your advocate, and has procured for you the inestimable gift of the Holy Spirit to subdue your iniquities. Cultivate the love of God in your heart, and he will make your path of duty plain before you. I dare say, God will make you more abundantly useful than ever.

Oh bring your mind off from this destructive notion, "That the curse of God follows you." This is a suggestion of Satan's to prevent your usefulness; but remember that text, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation," 2 Pet. ii. 9.; and he will certainly deliver you out of this, and restore you to his wonted favour.

Do not select such terrifying texts for your meditation, as in your letter you tell me you have done. It is as improper, as if you should eat the coldest melon, or use the most slight covering, when shivering with an ague. Chuse, the morning after you receive this letter, (by way of antidote to the texts of your own selecting), the following for your meditation: "His mercy is greater than the heavens," Psalm cviii. 4. "His mercy endureth for ever," Psalm cxviii. 1. Put together these two expressions, and see whether they do not amount to more than either your imprudences or your distress. You have, to be sure, done amiss, and dealt foolishly in the matter of ————. God forbid I should justify your conduct; but oh! let it not be said, let it not be once surmised, that it is beyond the reach of God's unmeasurable goodness to pardon, or of Christ's immensely rich merits to expiate. The Lord loves you with an everlasting love; and take, if you please, the latter part of the xxxth of Isaiah, ver. 18. for your contemplation: the words are, "For the Lord is a God of judgment; blessed are they that wait for him."

None can tell, none can think, what mercy there is with the Lord; with inconceivable tenderness his bowels yearn towards the weakest, frailest believer in his dear Son. We have dishonoured his holiness, and violated his law; but let us not, to accumulate our follies, derogate from the boundless riches of his mercy in Jesus Christ, to all those who seek and entreat it. There is a wide difference between humiliation and despair. Draw near to Christ with an humble boldness.

May you see many, many years on earth; and when the earth shall be no more, may you be received into the New Jerusalem; where dwelleth righteousness, consummate righteousness, and everlasting happiness. This, my dear sir, is my earnest wish and my fervent prayer for you, and for myself; who am, with great compassion and true regard, your obliged humble servant and friend.

P. S.—My favourite author Liborius Zimmermannus, whispers to me on this occasion the following passage: "Said I not unto thee, If thou wouldst BELIEVE, thou shouldst SEE the glory of God, and experience his goodness, when least deserved, or rather notoriously forfeited?" Hence may we be convinced, that his loving kindness is unbounded, is unwearied, is infinite; as much surpassing all our follies and all our thoughts, as the world of waters exceeds the drop of a bucket. Oh for a spirit of steady faith, to live under the continual belief of this precious, precious truth.

LETTER CLXXXIII.

Saturday morning.

DEAR SIR,—I AM sorry to hear that Mr —— should think my doctrine tends to the introduction of licentiousness. Far, very far from it! Mine is the genuine doctrine of the Scriptures; and the only doctrine to reclaim mankind, as it encourages sinners not to continue in their sins, but to turn unto their injured Lord, and receive salvation at his beneficent hand. "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out," are our blessed Master's own words; and all my writings, preaching, and conversation, are founded on that comfortable declaration to my lost, undone fellow-creatures; that tender invitation to those, in whom there is no health.

But Mr —— is offended at this. He, like the Egyptian taskmasters of old, requires men to make brick without straw. "Let us (says he, unmindful

of our impotence) make ourselves better, and then go to Christ, who will receive us favourably for our works' sake." But in this view, our works, even if we could perform them without the grace of Christ, would be ineffectual; Luke xvii. 20. Are these capable of expiating the guilt of a polluted race, and of procuring salvation? If our works could do this, then these and not Christ would be our Saviour. If we had a right to demand a recompense for our works, even on a supposition they were perfect, then a Redeemer and his death would be useless. Surely, therefore, Mr ——'s notions are contrary to the whole tenor of the gospel! May the divine Spirit open his eyes, and incline his heart, to discover that Christ offers himself to all who will come. The vilest of men have just the same right to Christ and his merits, as the best of men; a right founded not on their awakened desires, not on any thing in themselves, but purely, solely, entirely on the free grant of a Saviour. We are all sinners, though in a more or less degree; and we must all flee to Christ for spiritual blessings, not as deserving, but as guilty creatures;—a sad mortification this to the proud worldlings, or to the self-righteous moralist, whom it is the design of the gospel to humble.

Mr —— (as I dare say you have often heard him) speaks of heaven made easy, "upon condition of obedience to the gospel commands."* This would not be very easy to *me*, whatever it might be to *him*. But if heaven and eternal life be "the gift of God through Jesus Christ," and given us on account of his obedience unto death, then it is easy indeed. What love is here! Well might the apostle Paul say, that "the love of Christ constraineth us." Christ makes us free; and those whom He makes free, are free indeed, John viii. 36. This is the way of sal-

* Mr Hervey had seen so bad an use made by the Socinians of conditions and requisites, in opposition to the doctrine of free grace, that he could by no means allow even faith, much less our obedience, to be called a condition.

vation pointed out to us by the wisdom of the Almighty. May our eyes be enlightened to see this way, which many wise men overlook, at which many great men are offended!

I wish Mr ——— would study his Bible more, and the classics less. There is little good to be got by reading the Scripture carelessly; but he who humbly applies to God for direction, and exercises himself therein constantly and conscientiously, will find such an efficacy as is not to be found in any other book whatever; and therefore it is called, by way of pre-eminence, THE BIBLE (or THE BOOK); importing, that as this, and only this, is a divine work, no other books can be compared, or even so much as named, with it. It is the book of books; the Book of GOD. Mr ——— however neglects this book, I fear; and indeed, if I may speak my sentiments to you freely, I look upon him to be so puffed up with pride, and the conceit of his own abilities, that his passions run away with him, and he fires at every thing which thwarts any of the notions he has imbibed. Is not such a one disqualified for friendship? Can a man of his disposition attend coolly to arguments against his preconceived opinions, how modestly or forcibly soever such arguments may be urged? This surely is not the spirit of the gospel; nor are these the qualities of one who professes himself a disciple of that Master, whose exhortation is, "Learn of me, for I am lowly and meek." I have no hopes of doing Mr —— any good; and as we think so very differently, the less we have to do with one another perhaps the better. He really is not now fit even for a companion, much less for a bosom friend. No man can be a proper associate (as a writer of no small penetration has judiciously remarked) in whom these or such like infirmities are predominant; namely,

1. If he be reserved, or be incapable of communicating his mind freely. 2. If he be haughty, and proud of his knowledge, imperious in his disposition,

and fond of imposing his own sentiments on us. 3. If he be positive, and will dispute to the end, by resisting the clearest evidence, rather than be overcome. 4. If he be fretful and peevish, ready to take things in a wrong sense. 5. If he affect wit on all occasions, and is full of his conceits, puns, quibbles, jests, and repartees. These may agreeably entertain and animate an hour of mirth, but they have no place in the search after truth. 6. If he carry about him a sort of craft and cunning, and disguise, acting rather like a spy than a friend. Have a care of such a one as will make an ill use of freedom in conversation, and immediately charge you with shocking tenets, when you happen to differ from those sentiments which authority or custom has established. 7. In short, avoid the man who practises any thing that is unbecoming the character of a sincere, free, and open searcher after truth. And, above all things, pray and work against all evil qualities in your own breast.

I had a letter lately from our old acquaintance in the West, who complains grievously of his burdens, as he calls them. It seems he has ten children; and is hipped to death lest he and his family should be reduced to beggary. His income, to be sure, is scanty and precarious; but I conjured him not to be diffident of Providence, reminded him of our blessed Master's charge (Matth. vi. 25.) against being too anxious about our subsistence in this life; and I sent him likewise the following passage from a poem of the Rev. Mr Onely's; assuring him, at the same time, that if he would have a due concern for the things that are God's, then God would also be careful of him and his.

> But daughters, sons, alas! thy weakness scan;
> Know prescience never was design'd for man.
> Their wants you dread, some able hand supplies;
> Their wealth you build, some accident destroys.
> From thee some mites, and honest fame be given;
> The rest from virtue, and the care of Heaven.

He says, IF HE HAD NOT BEEN DEPRIVED OF FORESIGHT, he had never married; and, by way of expla-

nation, sent me an odd quotation, which I have here transcribed: "I cannot but admire the wisdom of nature, in denying to men and women that *foresight* when they are young which they acquire at a greater age; for without that, I believe the world could not subsist above fourscore years, and a new creation of men would be wanted once every hundred years at least; since the inconveniencies of marriage are *experimentally* known to overbalance the conveniencies. This YOUNG FOLKS will not believe, and thus the world is peopled."

Your friend Colonel —— has made a present of Steel's Christian Hero to all his officers. I wish, when he had been in such a disposition, that he had given to all the common men Dr Woodward's Soldier's Monitor. This book was wrote by the command of Queen Anne, as I have been told, and delivered to every soldier at the government's expense. The Sailor's Monitor, wrote by the same hand, was given to every sailor. And I think it very impolitic in the government to discontinue so well-judged a donation. If I was chaplain to a regiment, I would preach before the soldiers on this text: "I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved," Psalm xvi. 8.

Your reflections on seeing the skeleton at Oxford, and on your near view of Death (in the emblematical shape of a skeleton with an hour-glass and a dart) advancing towards you in your late sickness, have such a similarity with those of a worthy friend of mine, as I think will both surprise and please you. "Oh! my dear sir," says he, "to *talk* of death, and to enter in earnest upon dying, are two different things. To view the messenger, who comes from the JUDGE of all, as actually approaching with his open commission in one hand, and his uplifted dart to execute it in another, (an expecting grave, and an eternal judgment in his immediate train), is as different as to view a painted lion, who is only terrible on

canvass, and actually to see him with his rolling eyes, and really to hear his tremendous roar."

Have you seen the Rev. Mr Adam's Practical Lectures on the Church Catechism? He is an experienced Christian, and a spirited performance it is. The same gentleman wrote the preface to Mr Walker's (Truro) heart-searching sermons. Dr S—— made me a present of it; and wrote in the blank leaf before the title-page, "What betwixt the frenzy of anger, the ague of hopes and fears, the fever of love, the consumption of envy, our distempered minds are kept under a continual disease, against which these lectures are a certain specific." Mr Adam is rector of Wintringham in Lincolnshire; and has made, I am told, an amazing reformation amongst the people in that neighbourhood, who, before his settlement amongst them, were remarkably dissolute and ignorant. He spares no pains in discharging his ministerial duty. His congregations are very large, I hear; and men, women, and children, come ten or a dozen miles to attend his preaching.

A gentleman lent me the other day Dr Leland's View of the Principal Deistical Writers; amongst which is one MORGAN, who styles himself a MORAL PHILOSOPHER, a character which is of late grown very fashionable amongst our modern Deists; but THEY might, with equal propriety, call themselves MIRACULOUS HEALERS; for they could as soon heal a decayed body by their *moral philosophy*, as THEY could cure the sin-sick soul by it. Miserable teachers are all such, who *thus* pretend to reform either themselves or mankind. He only can cast devils out of the soul who can say to the leper, "Be thou clean," and to the storm, "Be thou still." He only can heal the decayed body who hath said to the paralytic, "Take up thy bed, and walk."

I am, dear sir, with great respect and much esteem, your most obliged and very humble servant, &c.

P. S.—I have a particular reason for desiring you

would give me your well-weighed opinion of the amiable Dr Watts' Orthodoxy and Charity United. It is wrote with an excellent design. The gentleman who persuaded me to purchase it is a person of great candour, learning, and piety. He is so fond of this book, that he has recommended it to all his distant acquaintance, and rarely goes into any company without introducing it in the conversation: he extols it in the strongest terms as a piece which no Christian ought to be without, since its grand end is to promote charitable sentiments and practices towards one another, amidst the numerous follies and errors of the time. Would to God our religious differences were properly settled on a sure foundation, that the contending parties were reconciled in love, and that "all we who call ourselves Christians might hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life." Amen, and amen.

LETTER CLXXXIV.

Weston-Favell, Nov. 4. 1757.

DEAR SIR,—YOU wonder at my delay in answering your very friendly letter. This is the true cause: When I received your favour, I was very busy in dispatching to the press my three fast sermons lately published. By some accident your letter was mislaid, and could not be found. This day it came to light; and the moment I looked upon the date it struck me with a painful regret, a regret almost equal to the pleasure I enjoyed in your edifying conversation.

Your lady has shewn the most welcome complaisance to me, and to the rose:* to me, in accepting what is less than a trifle; to the rose, in putting it to such a use. Could that poor vegetable be sensible,

* When this gentleman was at Weston, Mr Hervey (as he walked with him in the garden) plucked a rose, and desired him to present it to his wife, to put her in mind of the ROSE OF SHARON. She paid that regard to the giver and the gift, as to put it into a frame with a glass.

it would rejoice to be a remembrancer of its most amiable Creator. The prophet calls upon the whole creation, inanimate as it is, to exult and triumph in the grace of our incarnate God. "Sing, O heavens; be joyful, O earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains; O forests, and every tree," whether cultivated or wild; "for the Lord," by his incarnation, blood, and righteousness, "has redeemed Israel, and glorified himself," most magnificently displayed all his divine perfections, IN the salvation of JACOB.

I heartily wish that Mrs —— may become, every day, more and more acquainted with the ROSE OF SHARON; that his loveliness, riches, and glory, may be revealed in her heart by the Holy Ghost. Happy the souls in which this flower of heaven blossoms! which are charmed with its beauty, and refreshed with its odours. Their happiness will not fade as a leaf, but like the merit and mercy of their Lord, will be new every morning, new every moment, new through eternal ages.

I wish I could gratify your benevolent temper, by giving you a comfortable account of my health. But nothing administered for its succour and restoration succeeds. It seems to be the will of our great Physician, that my strength should be labour and sorrow. May his holy will be done! only may my faith in his blood be strong, and my love of his name be warm. Then I shall meet you, ere long, amidst the innumerable company of angels, and no more complain, "My head, my head;" no more say, "I am sick."

How shall I recompense my generous doctor, for prescribing without a fee? By wishing, that he may never want the aid which he so kindly tenders to his affectionate friend and brother in Christ, &c.

LETTER CLXXXV.

DEAR SIR,—UPON a repeated review of your sketches for instructing your family on Sunday evenings, I really do not know how to improve them. I

think they are well digested; but when you exercise your talent in speaking from those sketches, do not forget to implore a blessing on what you are going about. Stir up the gift of God which is in you by a zealous use of them, and you yourself will improve them better than I can for you. I shall only suggest, that as soon as you have finished, set down, as fresh heads for another occasion, what new thoughts occurred to you while you was speaking. Oh let us work while the day lasts! My dear friend, the Judge is at the door, and eternity at hand. May we watch and pray always, that we may be found worthy to stand before the Son of man at his coming.

I enclose part of a letter, sent by a clever man and no mean scholar.

"This with infinite pleasure I can inform you, that I am now brought to a sense of my duty, to which I was an entire stranger till lately. Glory be to God, I have now some concern upon my mind, some serious thoughts of a future state! How amazing is it, that a person should arrive at my years, without knowing any thing of the religion he professes! strange as it is, this was my case; for, till within these six months, I was as much in the dark as to spiritual affairs, as one that had never heard the name of Christ. The Bible was to me the same as an unknown language, and all my pretences to religion were nothing but a mere lifeless formality. Oh that the inexpressible marks of the love of my God and his goodness to me, may increase the love I owe to him more and more every day!"

Our friend Mr H——, who you know is a great favourer of the mystic writers, has desired me to read Mr Law's Spirit of Prayer, and Spirit of Love, which is an appendix to it. I shall ask him, whether he designed it to puzzle or edify me? I am sure it has done the first to me; may it do the latter to him. Oh, what need have we to pray for that blessed Spirit which may lead us into all truth!

I begin to be weaned from human writings, even from the most applauded. The pure milk of the

divine word my soul covets. Do not you relish its sweetness, and taste its power more and more? The apostle enjoins us "in every thing to give thanks, for this is the will of God," 1 Thess. v. 18.; and if we are to thank him for every thing, how ought we to thank him, how can we sufficiently thank him, for such a treasury of blessings as the Holy Bible contains for us; and yet, is it credible? there are, there are those, who neglect these gracious tidings of a reconciliation with God, through the mediation of his own Son Jesus Christ.

But whatever be the conduct of others, let you and I, dear sir, esteem it as it deserves, and say with the Psalmist, "I will delight myself in thy statutes, I will not forget thy word. Make me to understand the way of thy precepts, so shall I talk of thy wondrous works." David, you see, prayed to God for illumination, and talked of divine things. That this may be accomplished in us, and that we may follow David's example, I dare say you will add an amen, to the amen of, dear sir, yours very sincerely.

P. S.—I am told, and grieved I am to hear it, that the once zealous Mr —— is grown quite indolent, (no very laudable character for a clergyman), and has entirely laid aside his translation and improvement of the elegant Dr Stearne, *De visitatione infirmorum.* He shewed me a specimen of it some months ago. The translation was spirited, and the notes well calculated to supply the author's deficiencies. Nothing perhaps is more wanted, or would be more useful (especially to the clergy), than a judicious treatise on visiting the sick, in a neat pocket volume; but I am sensible there is nothing equally difficult to execute. I never yet saw one to my mind. The Clergyman's Companion, as it is called, is little more than a collection of prayers, with the order of visitation of the sick, out of the common prayer, the communion service, and the office of public and private baptism. If, methinks, such a man as Mr Walker of Truro could find time to set about it, it would be

done effectually, because he is a most experienced Christian, and has long been accustomed to the chambers of the sick, and would write from facts, and his own knowledge of the human mind. I would not give a rush for a jumble compiled from different authors: That is the labour of the head, and not the feeling of the heart, and can never produce the effects I wish to see.

LETTER CLXXXVI.

Weston-Favell, Jan. 8. 1757.

DEAR SIR,—MANY thanks for your last letter; indeed it delighted and edified me. Think no more of making me any present from your collection of books. It is in your power to give me a greater gratification, from the good treasure of your heart.

I am particularly delighted with your interpretation of "LCU ATH TZDC." Your sense is grand, and inexpressibly important; and, without your sense, methinks the whole translation is like a magnificent portal, without a hinge to turn upon. I am edified and comforted with your analysis of the whole verse. A most encouraging, and truly evangelical representation of the covenant of grace! I am sorry you are diverted from enlarging upon so excellent a subject. Let this work not be laid aside, but only postponed.

I am much pleased with your remarks on Dr ——'s sermon. I saw it some time ago, and thought with you, that he entirely mistook the meaning of his text; that his views of the gospel were very dim, and his account of that miracle of grace, salvation by Christ, very lame. I had also the happiness to be thoroughly of your opinion with regard to his injudicious outcries against reason. I declare, I look upon my religion to be reason in its highest refinement. My reason says, "Prove all things; admit nothing without a satisfactory proof; and when any thing is proved to be revealed by God, receive it as an oracle."

I cannot but think likewise, that every part of our religion (though absolutely undiscoverable by reason) is, when discovered and understood, perfectly rational; as it comports with the attributes of the Godhead, suits the state of man, and is most admirably adapted to display the divine glory, and redress human misery. Whatever is formed with such a tendency, to this my reason most readily subscribes, and pronounces worthy of all acceptance.

I hope by the time of the arrival of the enclosed frank, you will have a freight ready for the vessel; and to me, I assure you, it will be more precious than the merchandise of silver, or the gain of fine gold.

You have taken an effectual method to make me (enervated as my arm is, and languid as my spirits are) more punctual for the future in my correspondence. If this hand hath strength to hold a pen, it shall not be tardy in executing this office, or rather in discharging this debt any more.

I am entirely of your opinion with regard to the aspect of the times; there seems to be a black cloud hanging over the Protestant world. I fear we have abused our privileges. Now, perhaps, the Lord is going to take his fan in his hand, and thoroughly purge his floor. Prepare us, blessed Jesus! be our strength in an hour of trial! be our light in a day of darkness!

I have had some thoughts of publishing a couple of sermons, preached on the two preceding fast-days, relative to this important point; one upon Ezek. xviii. 27. the other upon Heb. xi. 28. Of these two discourses, contrary to my usual method, I happened to take notes. They pretend to nothing refined or extraordinary; they affect neither soaring sentiments nor lofty style; they are studiously plain; only I think they enlarge more upon Christ our sanctification, our redemption, our only refuge, than most of the discourses which I have seen written on that occasion. Will you give me your advice, and put up a prayer for the divine direction?

I long for the arrival of your precious cargo; to me it is peculiarly precious, as it makes evident, that life and immortality were known in ancient times, and revealed in the ancient Scriptures. It seems to me a strange, and worse than an useless attempt to controvert, and endeavour to overthrow this truth. May you, dear sir, have much of the spirit of wisdom and understanding, to discover the truth; much of the spirit of counsel and of might, to display, defend, and establish the truth, even the truth as it is in Jesus. Yours affectionately and gratefully, &c.

LETTER CLXXXVII.

Saturday morning.

DEAR SIR,—I FIND by the papers, that your old friend Dr ——, the physician, is dead. What a call to us to get our lamps trimmed, and our souls ready for their exit! what a forcible admonition to do good to immortal souls, while we have opportunity! May the God of glory be ever with you, and bless you with all spiritual blessings!

I greatly wish that those in the practice of physic would study St Paul as well as Hippocrates, and attend occasionally to the religious wants of their patients, when they are consulted as to their bodily disorders. This would be acting the part of Christian physicians. This would be endeavouring to copy after the compassionate Physician of mankind, who, while he cured the body, cured the soul.

Being totally and continually silent at the patient's bed-side, is, I think, in some measure, denying or being ashamed of the divine Redeemer, who bought us with his blood. Is it not, as it were, refusing to embark in his cause? How many sick might be improved and comforted by a physician, without any hinderance to his prescriptions, detriment to his character, or loss of his time? Oh that these masters of the healing art, would set the Lord always before them, and then he would direct their paths.

I was looking the other day into the life of Sir

Philip Sidney, who wrote the Arcadia, in Queen Elizabeth's time; and I find it recorded of him, that "being shot in the thigh in encountering the Spaniards near Zutphen in Holland, and parched with thirst, a bottle of liquor was procured for him; and just as Sir Philip was about drinking it, a poor soldier in the same condition, bleeding and ghastly, was carried along by him, and cast up his dying eyes at the same bottle; which Sir Philip perceiving, took it from his own mouth, and gave it to the poor man with these words, *Thy necessity, honest friend, is yet greater than mine.*" He told the surgeons when they cut him, "that they had indeed a man under their hands of a sensible and delicate nature, yet one to whom the great Redeemer had given power above himself, either to *do* or *suffer*; and therefore desired that they would not throw a blemish on their art, through over tenderness."

His last words were, "Love my memory; cherish my friends; their fidelity to me may assure you they are honest: but above all, govern your own will and affections by the will and word of your Creator and Saviour; in ME beholding the end of this world, and all its vanities." I will warrant you, the soldiers remembered these words of their general; and so would the sick, in like manner, long remember the words of their physician, if he would now and then introduce a few religious hints, and drop occasionally a striking sentence or two, with propriety and seriousness.

Worldly craftiness is a bad guide; I wish you may have religious discretion for yours, as Telemachus had the discreet Mentor, and that you would begin (instead of paying court to the great) to court souls for the everlasting Bridegroom. This is your true interest, and will avail you when every worldly consideration will be found ineffectual.

As soon as I had read Mr ——'s letter, I burnt it, according to your desire. Who can now retrieve the syllables, sentences, and words? Thus are the sins, all the sins of them that believe in the divine

Jesus, done away. What a privilege! what a blessing! should not our souls exult in it? should not our discourse dwell upon it?

Adieu, dear sir; and believe me, with great respect, and hearty wishes for your present and eternal welfare, yours, &c.

LETTER CLXXXVIII.

Weston-Favell, April 16. 1757.

DEAR SIR,—BELIEVE me, your letters are far from fatiguing me; they refresh me even under my greatest weakness. They tell me of Jesus which was crucified, the only cordial for my drooping soul.

What do you think is the meaning of, "But this shall be with burning and fuel of fire?" Isa. ix. 5. Is MACLTH a substantive? I should rather take it for an adjective, agreeing with SHA. Let the interpretation of this place fill the case of your letter.

I am raised indeed from my bed, but not released from my chamber, after a violent fever. The two preceding Sundays I have been enabled to officiate for myself; and my disorder has left upon me so grievous a cough, as makes my days, especially my nights, become labour and sorrow. Pray favour me with the continuation of your thoughts. They cheer and comfort me in my languid state. The two sermons were transcribed before this sickness seized me. And, since I have your encouragement, they shall soon (if my life is prolonged) be put to the press. I propose to entitle them, The Time of Danger, and The Way of Safety.* The Lord God omnipotent accompany them with his blessing! Mean they are, as the stones from the shepherd's sling; but I remember it is written, "They shall subdue with sling stones." In this word do I trust, in this word do I comfort me. May our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our FATHER, give you, dear sir, everlasting consolation, for all the kindness you have shewed to your truly affectionate friend. Yours, &c.

* See these Sermons in Vol. V.

LETTER CLXXXIX.

Weston-Favell, May 19. 1757.

My dear Friend,—Accept my best thanks for your welcome and valuable letter. It found me just released from the chamber of sickness; the fever removed, the cough abated, but my strength like the bruised reed. And now my mind is a fellow-sufferer with my body; this being enervated, that is enfeebled.

However, as I am delighted with your criticisms, give me leave to propose another text to your consideration, which puzzled me much as I was reading yesterday; you will find it in Zech. xiv. 6, 7. The Hebrew of the sixth verse seems to be uncommonly difficult.

A sermon or two I am still inclined to publish. In this, and in all our ways, may the God of all wisdom direct us, and the God of all grace prosper us, through Jesus Christ!

I have not the honour of Lord D——'s acquaintance, but I hear that he is full of grace, and valiant for the truth; a lover of Christ, and an ornament to his gospel. Lady F—— is alive, and full of good works, and I hope grows up in him in all things who is the head. Dr S—— (whom you inquire after) still resides at N——; is in high repute as a physician, and, I trust, does not forget or neglect the one thing needful; though the world, the smiling world, is a syren. Lord, stop our ears against its enchanting song, and let our eyes be blind to its inveigling charms. Mr Moses Browne executes his ministry at Olney with much acceptance, I am informed, and with a good deal of success. About ten days ago Mr P—— took a family-dinner with me. Our conversation turned partly upon points of literature, partly upon evangelical subjects. O that we may taste the sweetness, feel the energy of the latter, and count all things as dross in comparison of their transcendent excellency! Is not your interpretation of Zech. xiv. 6, 7. rather too forced? Is not the

following somewhat more natural and easy, if not more just?

"It shall come to pass in that day, there shall not be light," full and strong, in opposition to the gloom of night; but now effulgence and clearness of vision, anon obscurity and dimness of vision: "Yet it shall be one" real, determinate "day;" whose duration, whose properties, and all whose circumstances, are known to the Lord. Thus much he hath graciously revealed by his prophet, that, during the first periods, the morning and the noon of this wonderful dispensation, it shall not be entire day nor entire night, but a mixture or interchange of both. Sometimes grace triumphant, sometimes sin rebelling in the hearts of believers. Sometimes calamity darkening, sometimes prosperity brightening the state of the church. However, at the eventide, when such an appearance is least expected, it shall be unmixed, prevailing, perfect light. Then "the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun as the light of seven days. Then the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and his people shall be all righteous."

Freely censure, solidly correct this interpretation, if you think it improper; and give me leave to expect, according to your own appointment, a monthly letter for the comfort and edification of, dear sir, your very affectionate friend and servant, &c.

LETTER CXC.

Weston-Favell, Aug. 6. 1757.

My dear Friend,—I have been too tardy in acknowledging the receipt of your letter, which was very valuable, and deserved thanks as speedy as they are sincere. The true cause of my delay is this: I have been preparing two or three sermons for the press, which to my enervated hand is really a work of toil. Yesterday I sent them to London, and I hope to see them in print within the space of a fortnight. I purpose to have some upon neat

paper, for the use of the gentry, if God shall incline the hearts of any such persons to look into them; and others upon worse paper, for the benefit of the poor, and the conveniency of giving away. As soon as they appear, you will give me leave to send you a copy; and if you should like to give them among the poor, I will send you a considerable number. With them I intend to put into your hands a treatise lately published, under the title of Letters on Theron and Aspasio, in two small volumes. The author is a Scotsman, I presume, because they were printed at Edinburgh, and he gave orders for a set to be sent to me from Edinburgh. He conceals his name, and none that I am acquainted with are able to discover whose work it is.* There are some strictures on my performance; but by far the greatest part of the book is very wide from this mark. Some things are truly excellent, and some animadversions upon me are perfectly just; but others (if I mistake not) are unfair and disingenuous. The manner of writing is by no means despicable, rather elegant and spirited than coarse or dull. But there is such an implacable bitterness of spirit, and such an unchristian virulence of censure, against many of the best men that ever lived, and best authors that ever wrote, as much surprises and greatly offends me. I think I never saw a notion of faith more lax, nor an idea of grace more exalted, than in this book. However, I will not forestall your judgment, but will desire your acceptance of the piece, and your remarks upon it.

If your account of the ancient believers, and their knowledge of Christ be right, then the opinion of the generality of divines is wrong: they suppose, that the devout Jews saw in their sacrifices, not barely a nobler sacrifice to be offered up by the Saviour, but the Saviour himself suffering, bleeding, and dying. How will you reconcile with your scheme St Paul's declaration, "The gospel was preached unto them," explained by his definition of the gospel,

* The author was Mr Robert Sandeman, a congregational preacher at Edinburgh, a disciple of Mr John Glass.

"Christ died for our sins?" Heb. iv. 2. 1 Cor. xv. 3. —You say, "Does IKRUAH any-where signify effulgence?" In Job xxxi. 27. you will find IKER bearing this signification. Yet, I must confess, I am not thoroughly satisfied with my own interpretation, it is too low and restricted; for the prophet is evidently foretelling a state of things and a stock of knowledge greatly superior to any thing enjoyed under the Jewish dispensation; and to this last, I think my exposition is most suitable. I hope you have a long letter ready, and will not punish my delay according to the rigour of the law of retaliation. I am, with unfeigned gratitude, and cordial affection, yours, &c.

Pray favour me with your Dissertation on Job, his time, his country, and religion. They are very curious subjects, and you will enrich them with evangelical truths.

LETTER CXCI.

Weston-Favell, Sept. 3. 1757.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—MANY thanks for your last; I shall read it, and read it again; and the Lord give me a right understanding of that most precious and important chapter.

I hope you will accompany my sermons with your prayers to God for a blessing on them, the reader, and the writer; and I shall be truly thankful for the communication of any remarks, corrections, or improvements that may occur in your perusal of them. This, and any other of my writings, I should be glad to have rectified where they are wrong, enriched where they are impoverished; because, though such improvements may come too late to take place while I live, they may, when I am dead, be admitted, and enable me to speak more usefully.

What think you of the method taken by a modern critic to interpret Psalm lxviii. 30.? "Hoc in loco, fera arundinis, cœtus robustorum, et juvenci, sunt leones, tauri, pecudesque lascivientes, sive tyranni

feroces insolentesque: quibus, continuata translatione, addit psaltes KESEP ' BERETZI METHEDOTEM' hoc est," [here a word is wanting in the original, and not knowing what author is referred to, we could not supply it from thence], " que de industria conculcantes et turbantes argenteos rivos, ardentes nimirum et vastantes vicinorum Judæorum bona." The author queries, whether " DETZ" from DETZ, *currere*, may, consistently with the propriety of the Hebrew language, be interpreted a river? might he not also query, whether MEKOP is ever, among the Hebrew writers, and by way of adjective, used to describe the colour of the waters? Homer, I remember, has

——Ποταμος καλλιῤῥοος αργυροδινης.

But I am not certain that any such expression gained admittance into the school of the prophets. Your sentiments upon this criticism will entertain, instruct, and oblige, dear sir, your truly affectionate friend and servant.

LETTER CXCII.

Saturday morning.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—How fares it with you? Overwhelmed I find with business! but still, I trust, remembering Christ and eternal ages.

I think you reason well, and very strongly, on what you propose. May the Wisdom, from which nothing is hid, direct you in all your undertakings; may the Power, to which nothing is impossible, prosper your prescriptions for my benefit, and that of others! I assure you I shall steadily persevere in the use of them, and intend to begin very soon; though a continued cold, and an unexpected journey, have hitherto unfitted me from taking any medicines of this sort. Mr ——, of whom you inquired after me yesterday, told me you imputed to the journey my neglect in not having yet sent your prescription to the apothecary's; and I am obliged to your candour

for ascribing it to that cause, and not to any disregard of your advice: for I am persuaded,

——————Si qua pergama dextra
Defendi possent, etiam hac defensa fuissent.
VIRG. ÆN. II.

I have just been reading Gerhard's Christian Support under all Afflictions; and a most excellent book it is. If your medicines have not the desired effect, I must seek relief from him: From HIM, do I say? From a fellow mortal? Ah! what are all the consolations that all the creatures in the universe can afford, in comparison of that grand consolation of our condescending Lord's, "Ye are my friends!" John xv. 14. "Come and inherit the kingdom prepared for you," Matth. xxv. 34.; "where the inhabitants shall no more say, I am sick," Isa. xxxiii. 24; "and where there shall be no more death nor sorrow," Rev. xxi. 4.

I am, my dear friend, with great esteem, and under a due sense of many obligations, most affectionately and most sincerely yours, &c.

LETTER CXCIII.

Saturday morning.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—IF you have any law books by you, I wish you would look into the indexes, and see what laws have been made to secure the Lord's day from profanation. It is pity that these* should

* All persons, who profane the Lord's day, are liable to the following penalties; and it is much wished that the magistrates would determine to put these laws in execution with the utmost strictness.

By doing or executing any business or work of their ordinary callings on the Lord's day, or any part thereof, (works of necessity and charity only excepted); under which head is included shaving on Sundays, which is a most shameful and notorious custom. } By the 29th Car. II. cap. 7. persons convict hereof by view of a justice of the peace, confession of the party, or witnesses, are to pay five shillings, or be put in the stocks two hours: licensed houses besides forfeit their licenses.

be unknown to the common people; and still a greater pity, that our justices of peace should not exert themselves vigorously in an affair of such consequence to the present and eternal welfare of their fellow-creatures. I wish a spirited pamphlet was judiciously drawn up and published on this occasion; setting the sins of *omission* in a true light. It grieves me to think how much good might be done, especially by gentlemen who have leisure and abilities to plan schemes for the public benefit; but so far are they from applying themselves in good earnest to promote religion, that they too generally ridicule or discourage any attempts of this kind. Ah! how little do they reflect, that the night is coming on apace, when no man can work, John ix. 4.; and that for all these things God will bring them into judgment.

Can you tell me who was the author of The Duty of Reproof? The most material objections against reproving are there considered; some cautions and directions are added, and in such a manner as may facilitate the successful discharge of this duty. A duty too much neglected, though enjoined us by no less authority than the Scripture itself, which is profitable for reproof. "Reprove one that hath understanding," says Solomon, "and he will understand knowledge," Prov. xix. 25. And the apostle Paul urges Timothy to "reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine," 2 Tim. iv. 2. Indeed, my dear friend, you are very deficient in this duty of reproof, though you have so many opportu-

By public crying, or exposing to sale any wares, merchandise, &c.	By the same act it is forfeiture of goods so exposed to sale.
By idling, or wandering in time of divine service.	By the same acts, 5s. or stocks two hours.
Alehouse keepers, vintners, innkeepers, permitting tippling in their houses.	By 1st Jac. I. cap. 9. if convict of such permission, are to pay 10s. and if convict of drunkenness, disabled to keep an alehouse for three years, by 21st Jac. I. cap. 7.

nities of doing it with the utmost propriety. Pray read this little pamphlet over and over again. Weigh it thoroughly. You will then, through the grace of God, be zealous in reproving others, and will readily pardon the freedom I have occasionally taken in reproving you whom I so much love and value. You remember Sir George Lyttleton's lines,

Some merit's mine to dare to be sincere,
But greater your's sincerity to bear.

Dr Sherlock's Defence and continuation of his discourse concerning the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and our union and communion with him, was put into my hands the other day; but, in my opinion, it is far from being a satisfactory defence. Antisozzo * is an unanswerable book; and Dr Sherlock never was so gravelled in all his life as he was by the publication of that witty, keen, and solid performance.

Do you know any one who has got Schmidius's Greek Concordance to the Greek Testament? I am told it is well executed, and it must be very serviceable, as it shows at one view in what sense the same word is used in different passages. I will buy it, but should be glad to see it first, if you can borrow it for me.

Bishop Patrick on Contentment and Resignation, I here return you; as likewise Dr Barrow on the same subject.

Baxter on Universal and Special Redemption I must beg to keep a little longer, especially as you tell me your sentiments and his are nearly the same. Our friend Mr —— highly esteems this book; and he has sent me Baxter's Aphorisms on Justification, which he has desired me, as they are explanatory of each other, to read at the same time. Baxter in these pieces, he tells me, steers a middle course between the Scylla of Arminius's system and the Charybdis of Calvin's. When I have read them with due attention, I shall, without reserve, communicate my remarks to you.

* See Letter CCVII.

Oh! my dear friend, what need have we for prayer to be guided aright amidst so many different opinions, even of good and great men. Arminius, Calvin, Baxter, all excellent men in their way, yet how divided in their notions! But Jesus, that eternal source of love, will, I would charitably hope, bless all who sincerely desire to magnify his holy name, notwithstanding their different apprehensions on these points. God, of his unerring wisdom, assist us in all our determinations! God, of his infinite mercy, defend us from all error, and grant that we may be true followers of our Lord and Saviour, who is "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Israel!" What a comfortable consideration is it, that there is such a light for my dear friend, and for his, most affectionately and most inviolably, &c.

LETTER CXCIV.

Wednesday morning.

My dear Friend,—I thank you for remembering me before the throne of grace. Let your prayers be for my cheerful resignation to the divine good pleasure, and for clear manifestations to me of Jesus Christ. My life has long been a burden to myself, and is now become unprofitable to others. Your intention to visit me is kind; but I am not fit for company, unable either to carry on or relish conversation; best when alone: therefore do not give yourself the trouble of coming ten miles. I accept the will for the deed. As to your translation of Zimmermannus *De eminentia cognitionis Christi*, I will, if my languid spirits can bear the task, carefully read it over, which I have never been able to do since I saw you in London. I lent it to Mr ——. When he has done with it, desire him to convey it to me: you shall then have (if the Lord will) the result of my renewed perusal of that piece, which I formerly was so desirous of having translated by you. May the Lord of all power make you strong to labour

in his sacred service, and crown your labours with abundant success. I am your truly affectionate brother in Christ, &c.

LETTER CXCV.

Saturday morning.

My dear Friend,—I have no heart to take any medicines. All but Christ is to me unprofitable: blessed be God for pardon and salvation through his blood. Let me prescribe this cordial for my dear friend.

May your health be renewed as the eagle's, though mine has long been fading as a leaf! and may we both from our hearts adore the dispensations of our God and Saviour, which, though to us-ward very different, are in all respects very good.

We were drinking tea yesterday; and I heard one of the company say, to whom you had given Bishop Wilson on the Sacrament, This is Dr S——'s gift. Oh that God may give him to eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ! and to live by faith on the unsearchable riches of a Redeemer! Then we shall, ere long, eat bread and drink new wine together in the kingdom of our Father.

I have not yet wrote to Biddeford; but the affair you desired me to inquire about shall not be forgot when I next write thither. Can you excuse my dilatory proceeding? Business, to my languid spirits, is like the sons of Anak (Numb. xiii. 28.) to the Israelitish spies, so forbidding and so formidable.

The reasons you urged I have considered; I really know not how to act. May the unerring God vouchsafe to guide a poor sinner! Now, where is my faith in that divine promise, "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths?" It is scarcely so much as a grain of the smallest seed: Blessed Jesus, increase it in us both!

Do you, as you formerly did, commit your way

unto the Lord, and beseech him to bring it to pass? My dear friend, let us look more unto God, for we have a Friend in the court of Heaven; we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. Ever and inviolably yours, &c.

LETTER CXCVI.

Weston-Favell, Jan. 3. 1758.

DEAR MR ——, I RECEIVED your welcome valuable letter in due time; but almost as soon as I received it I was seized with a violent illness,—so violent, that the current report was, "Hervey is dead." Near to death I certainly was; and God Almighty knows I am, according to human appearance, not far* from it even now; but pray let me, if I live, expect the continuation of your remarks. Your letters are such as I should delight to read even in my last moments.

I wish you many a happy new year on earth, and at the last an abundant entrance into the New Jerusalem, where the voice of joy and health is perpetually heard.

Weak I am, very weak, and much out of order; insomuch that I have not been able to go to church ever since Christmas. But your writings refresh and delight, instead of fatiguing me! Your fourth paragraph has most exactly stated the difference which subsists between yourself and Aspasio relating to faith. The forbearance and candour with which you treat this difference does not give up a jot or tittle of your own opinion, yet it tends very much to conciliate favour and esteem in its behalf.

Your Vision is very grand, and quite striking: I love such strokes of imagination, they keep attention awake, and impart pleasure together with profit. Aspasio is doubly obliged to your pen, formerly for correcting, now for defending his work. You observe, My enemy is yours. He has attacked your

* Mr Hervey died the December following.

generous vindication. In reply to this attack you have spoke my very sentiments.*

Mr Wesley, you will find, is angry with me on the opposite score, for speaking too much, and, as he thinks, too openly on the side of election and particular redemption. Pray favour me with your free opinion, and wherever you think he charges me justly, or I have expressed myself improperly, spare not to speak the naked truth. He has lately published a large book, price six shillings stitched, on the doctrine of Original Sin; great part of which is an abridgment of Dr Watts' Ruin and Recovery, and of another treatise wrote by Mr Hebden. In this he takes occasion to quote two or three passages from Theron and Aspasio, one from Volume II. which he thus introduces: "To explain this a little farther in Mr Hervey's words, By fœderal head I mean, what the apostle teaches, &c. That as Adam was the first general representative (of *this kind*, says Aspasio, but Mr Wesley makes him say) *of mankind*, Christ was," &c. "Far from resting upon a single text," &c. he goes on to the bottom of the page, then turning back to the upper part, represents me as forming a conclusion in these words: "All these expressions demonstrate, that Adam (as well as Christ) was a representative of *all mankind;* and that what he did in this capacity, did not terminate in himself, but affected all whom he represented." This is a very injurious representation. One sentence is a palpable misquotation.† Would it be proper to take any notice of it? I am sometimes apprehensive that he would draw me into a dispute about particular redemption. I know he can say startling and horrid things on this subject; and this, perhaps, might be the most effectual method to prejudice people against my principal point. I am, dear sir, with much gratitude and true affection, yours in Christ.

* This refers to the remarks (made by the gentleman to whom Mr Hervey here writes) on the Scotch author (Mr Sandeman) who wrote the Letters on Theron and Aspasio.

† See Aspasio Vindicated, Vol. IV. Lett. 2.

LETTER CXCVII.

Weston-Favell, June 23. 1758.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I LITTLE thought, when I put Mr Wesley's manuscript into your hand, that I should see it in print so soon. I took very little notice of it, and let it lie by me several months, without giving it an attentive consideration. It seemed to me so palpably weak, dealing only in positive assertions and positive denials, that I could not imagine he would adventure it into the world without very great alterations. But it is now come abroad, just as you received it, in a two shillings pamphlet, entitled, A Preservative from Unsettled Notions in Religion. Of this pamphlet, what he has wrote against me makes only a small part. Now then the question is, Whether I shall attempt to answer it? Give me your opinion, as you have given me your assistance; and may the Father of mercies give you an increase of knowledge and utterance, of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Ill I have been, and ill I am; torn almost to pieces by a cough in the night, which admits of no remedy; whatever is taken to assuage, exasperates it. Of all men living, that are not absolutely confined, surely I am the weakest. If by such weakness the Lord Jesus will vouchsafe to glorify his name, how transparent, how effulgent will be the glory of his power! I have not seen Mr P—— this many a day, no, nor this many a month; how I fear lest the world has beguiled him! Blessed be the Lord, for setting our affections on a happier state; blessed be his grace, for giving us some knowledge of Jesus, as the way to immortal mansions! There we may be citizens, here only sojourners. I am, with true gratitude, and sincere affection, yours in Christ Jesus.

LETTER CXCVIII.

Weston-Favell, Feb. 22. 1758.

MADAM,—I RECEIVED the favour of your letter, and found no small pleasure in perusing its contents. It gave me a singular satisfaction to see a lady of such fine sense, and in the very bloom of life, mindful of the things which belong to her eternal peace. May this happy disposition increase with your increasing years! and it will be the greatest blessing that you can enjoy, or your correspondent wish.

If my writings have afforded you any entertainment, or been the means of administering the least improvement, I desire to adore and bless the all-gracious God: For he, madam, teaches to profit; his Spirit commands success; and all our good comes wholly from his heavenly benediction.

I am pleased to find this, among your other valuable expressions: "I want to have all those heavenly consolations." You consider religion in a right view. It is not a vexatious burden, or an irksome task; but it is intended to be the comfort of our lives, and the joy of our hearts. God is the God of all comfort, Christ is styled "the Consolation of Israel," and the Holy Ghost is called "the Comforter." The gospel is the most comfortable report imaginable: It is glad tidings, and the joyful sound: It assures poor sinners, that God has laid all their iniquities, both great and small, on his beloved Son; that Jesus Christ has brought in a most perfect and everlasting righteousness, whereby they may be justified; and that our first, our great, our leading duty is, to believe all this in our own behalf, for our own benefit.

By the comfort and peace resulting from these blessings, it would win our hearts to love the God who is so immensely amiable and gracious to us; to be studious of doing his pleasure, who has made such unspeakably rich provision for our happiness. The

apostle prays for his Thessalonian converts, that the Father of everlasting compassions would first comfort their hearts, and then, and thereby, establish them in every good word and work.

I should make no scruple to send my fast sermon for your perusal, if I had one. But it has pleased the divine Providence to visit me with a violent fever, which has confined me for many weeks. I am still the prisoner of this disease, so that I was incapable of going abroad on the fast-day. And indeed, if it had been otherwise, I should scarcely have been able to gratify my own inclination, by complying with your hints; because I never write my sermons, having accustomed myself to preach without notes; and it was owing to a particular incident, that those three discourses which I published were committed to writing.

Permit me, madam, to wish, that you may be steadfast and immoveable in your present turn of mind, which is so truly wise and noble; that by him who sitteth in heaven, and beholds all the children of men, it may be said of Miss ——, as it was formerly said of another excellent person, "Mary has chosen that good part which shall not be taken from her."

To these wishes, allow me the additional pleasure of being, madam, your most obedient humble servant, &c.

LETTER CXCIX.

Weston-Favell, March 4. 1758.

DEAR MR ——, I HAVE a long letter, containing two or three sheets, from Mr Wesley. It consists of animadversions on my Dialogues and Letters, which I should be glad if you would peruse, and favour me with your opinion. He wrote me one before, more stinging and sarcastic than this. I have taken no notice of either, being very unwilling to embark in controversy; but for your judgment on the last, which is written with candour and temper,

I should be much obliged, and have an additional reason to be, dear sir, your affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER CC.

Weston-Favell, March 11. 1758.

MADAM,—I AM much obliged for your benevolent wishes relating to my health. By way of return, permit me to wish, that your soul may prosper, may flourish, may blossom as a rose; that you may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

From this passage we may observe, that the way to advance in true holiness of heart and life, is to advance in the knowledge of Christ. It is for want of knowing Christ, that the generality of mankind are so captivated by trifles, and enslaved to transient gratifications: It is for want of knowing Christ more thoroughly, that many Christians have so little peace and joy, and many go mournfully in their way to eternity.

"By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many." By giving them the knowledge of himself, of his divine dignity and inestimably precious work—of that grand price which he paid for the redemption of sinners, which delivers them from the wrath to come, and entitles them to "the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

"The divine power," says St Peter, "has given us all things pertaining to life and godliness." How? "Through the knowledge of him who has called us to glory and virtue;" through the knowledge of Christ, as calling us to the enjoyment of eternal glory, which he has procured for us by his blood; and thereby most sweetly leading and engaging us to the exercise of every virtue.

I hope Marshall on Sanctification will be blessed to your consolation and edification. If it is not at the first reading, it may at the second, or it may at the third. I would say to the reader of this excel-

lent treatise, as the prophet Elijah said to his servant, who went to the sea in order to make observation, but found nothing worthy of notice, "Go again, seven times."

I have seen Dr Glynn's poem, entitled, The Day of Judgment. It is not without elegance and beauty, but it wants that energy and pathos, which, on so grand and interesting an occasion, should alarm, transport, and awe our souls; but its chief deficiency, in my opinion, is, that it neglects to ascribe proper honour unto Christ. He is indeed very slightly hinted at in one chosen line, but he should have made the most distinguished figure throughout the whole piece. All judgment is committed to him. It is Christ who will come in the clouds of heaven; we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. This to the believer is a most comfortable and delightful consideration; "My Redeemer is my Judge. He who died for me passes the final sentence. Look how great is his majesty and glory! So great is my atonement and propitiation."

Should I ever come to London, I will be sure to do myself the pleasure of waiting upon Miss ——. In the mean time, what she mentions by way of caution, shall be observed with all punctuality due to a command, by her most obedient humble servant.

LETTER CCI.

Weston-Favell, May 13. 1758.

MADAM,—I HAVE too long delayed to acknowledge the favour of your last. The reflection gives me uneasiness, but the occasion gives you an opportunity of exercising indulgence. If you please to ascribe my silence to much business, and little health, you will do justice to my proceeding and to your own candour.

You inquire after the best week's preparation for the sacrament. I cannot say that I much admire any of those books. They are, I think, loose,

rambling, indistinct companions: they tend rather to bewilder than inform the judgment. For my own part, I prefer the little account of this ordinance in Mr Marshall on Sanctification, to all those prolix treatises. It begins page 298 of the sixth edition, to which I wrote a recommendatory preface.

If you should want a collection of prayers suited to this solemnity, or to any other occasion, there is none, in my opinion, better than Mr Jenks's Offices of Devotion, (which has passed thirteen editions). I should far sooner choose to read his two volumes of Meditations, than the New Whole Duty of Man. Jenks has written another little treatise excellently good, and truly evangelical; it is entitled, Submission to the righteousness of God. It was one of the first books that gave me an insight into the truth of the gospel; or the way of salvation by the infinitely glorious obedience of our surety, Jesus Christ.

The word *Amen* has two significations. It denotes an ardent wish,—Lord, let it be according to my humble petition. It denotes likewise a firm faith, —Lord, I am persuaded that thou wilt fulfil thy promise to grant my petition.

If you love entertainment, my next shall recommend a book, that is as entertaining as a novel* or a play, yet edifying as a sermon. I believe, madam, you would have no reason to repent of the purchase, if you was to buy Mr Boston's Human Nature in its Fourfold State; of which, as I have given a character in the second volume of Theron and Aspasio, I need not say any thing more in this place.

As God is sending forth his word, and renewing the face of material nature; so may he send forth his blessed Spirit, and reveal Christ, and renew the state of our souls! This will make us to differ from our former selves, as much as the present bloom and verdure of the creation differ from the rugged desolations of the winter.

I wish you, madam, the continual presence of this

* The book here meant is De Foe's Family Instructor.

divine Comforter, and am your most obedient humble servant, &c.

LETTER CCII.

Weston-Favell, Aug. 5. 1758.

DEAR SIR,—HEREWITH I send two other sheets of my intended work. Be so good as to examine them with rigour, and correct them with freedom.

I am afraid lest the weakness of the advocate should injure the blessed cause. I am the more solicitous, because the unexpected acceptance of my fast sermons will probably open a pretty wide door of admission for this piece. Besides six thousand printed in London, an edition was printed in Scotland, which was speedily sold off; and I was desired, by a society established for giving away religious books among the poor, to grant them leave to print an impression for this purpose. In Ireland they have been printed; into Dutch they are translated; and a letter received last week from some pious and ingenious stranger in America, informs me, that they have been reprinted there, and found much acceptance: all this will be a kind of recommendatory preface to this projected piece. The good Lord grant I may speak and write sound words, such as cannot be reproved! My prayer is, that you may be of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, always and on all occasions, and more especially when you are sifting and improving the writings of, dear sir, your truly affectionate and much obliged friend.

LETTER CCIII.

Weston-Favell, Sept. 4. 1758.

MADAM,—BE so good as to present my very affectionate compliments to your excellent friend Mr Kennedy. Inform him that my intended work has for a long season, on account of my great infirmities, been like the sun in Gibeon, and like the moon

the valley of Ajalon. I shall be particularly pleased and thankful to receive his thoughts on that important subject, the assurance of faith. Mine are much the same as Mr Ebenezer Erskine's in his valuable sermons, and as Mr Boston's, in his most judicious notes on the Marrow of Modern Divinity.

Pray, madam, favour me with a long extract from Mr Kennedy's* letter: I do assure you, I admire his writings; they have a beauty which is quite natural and artless; joined with a piety which is very affecting and edifying.

A book has lately appeared, in two small volumes, entitled, Letters on Theron and Aspasio. I cannot say I would recommend it to your perusal, but I should be glad if you would mention it in some conversation with your learned and devout visitants, in order to know their opinion. For my own part, I can hardly tell what opinion to form. The author conceals his name;† and it seems difficult to discover his principles or his aim. Some things are excellent, written with spirit, and in a strain truly evangelical; in some things I stand corrected by him, I kiss the rod, and far from being displeased, am thankful for his animadversions; though in some instances he has acted a disingenuous part; not consulting the most correct edition of my book, not adverting to my own explanation of my meaning, and making me approve the whole of a person's works where I only commend some particular part. But what gives me the greatest disgust, and will, I believe, offend every candid reader, is a bitter vein of contempt and invective against some of the best men that ever lived, and some of the best authors that ever wrote. I once thought the apostle James's question implied an impossibility; but it seems to be reduced to real fact by the pen of this critic, and in the Letters on

* Mr Kennedy, whom Mr Hervey so highly and justly respected, was minister of the Scots church in Rotterdam, formerly minister at Cavers in Scotland.

† See Letter CXC.

Theron and Aspasio, where the "fountain sends forth" at the same place, in the same performance, "sweet water and bitter."†

I hope you will not act with Mr Kennedy according to the exact rules of retaliation; but though he has been slow to write, you will be swift to answer, that he may the more speedily improve and delight yourself, madam, and your very humble servant.

LETTER CCIV.

Friday night.

DEAR SIR,—I HAVE sent you the following letter for your inspection, and shall make no remarks on it myself, lest I mislead your judgment. The gentleman who wrote it means well, and is desirous of promoting the interest of the gospel in the way which he apprehends to be right; but he thinks differently from you and me, not only in his notions of imputed righteousness, but of other evangelical peculiarities. I have transcribed his letter, and concealed his name, that you may communicate your remarks with more freedom than perhaps you would have done, had I not taken these precautions to prevent your discovery of my correspondent.

October 7. 1758.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—WITHERSPOON'S Essay on the Connexion between the doctrine of Justification by the Imputed Righteousness of Christ and Holiness of Life, dedicated to you, was lately put into my hands. You know that I have an unconquerable dislike to your favourite expression, *the imputed righteousness of Christ.* I would on no account have used it in any of my own writings; and I wish it was universally laid aside, particularly by every minister in his pulpit; because I apprehend, the notions which the generality of people conceive of the "imputed righteousness of Christ," has done as much mischief,

† See Sermons and Tracts, page 130, note.

the valley of Ajalon. I shall be particularly pleased and thankful to receive his thoughts on that important subject, the assurance of faith. Mine are much the same as Mr Ebenezer Erskine's in his valuable sermons, and as Mr Boston's, in his most judicious notes on the Marrow of Modern Divinity.

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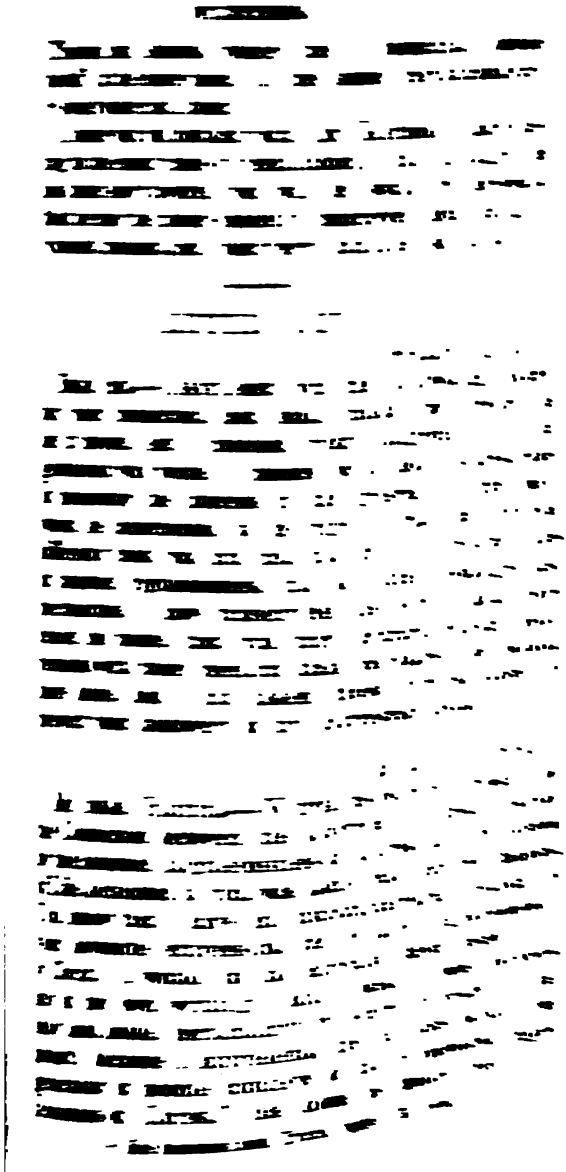
* Mr Kennedy, whom Mr Hervey so highly and justly respected, was minister of the Scots church in Rotterdam, formerly minister at Lovers in Scotland.

† See Letter [illegible].



especially amongst the lower sort, to the cause of Christianity, as the writings of infidelity have done amongst those of a higher rank. This is my settled opinion. Infidels may be, and often have been convinced; but persons of weak minds, habituated to the sound of the *imputed righteousness of Christ*, (a satisfactory definition of which very few can give), are not only steeled against all conviction, but are too apt to disregard morality, and to censure and despise every preacher and writer, who, from principle or any other cause, disapproves of this *cant term*. Pardon me, for I really think it so, and therefore cannot call it otherwise; yet I own myself a great admirer of Witherspoon's Essay; I think it the best defence of the doctrine of redemption that I have ever seen. My principal, and almost only objection, is against the phrase "imputed righteousness." It appears to me quite unscriptural to speak of the "righteousness of Christ being imputed to us;" it is liable to great abuse, and it is not easily understood: nor am I satisfied to use it, notwithstanding all you have said in its defence, and all that so judicious and excellent a man as Dr Doddridge (in his sermons on Salvation by Grace) has said to explain it. I fall in, however, with Witherspoon's sentiments, though I do not use his particular phrases: and you will observe, he often intermixes others to the same purpose; as, page 17, the Saviour's merit. Page 21, vicarious sufferings. Acceptance of the gospel, page 23. Doctrine of Christ crucified, his atonement, page 29. Flying to the propitiation of Christ, page 36; the doctrine of Christ's mediation, &c. &c. By these it appears, that it is not the phrase, but the thing, justification by Christ alone, on which he lays the stress, (see page 70, line 47,) and his arguments will be equally forcible on any man's principles who is not a Socinian. I believe the doctrine, as he has stated it, page 15, though I should not chuse to use some of his expressions. His remark, page 61, line 18, &c. is, I think, very just, and confirmed by many melancholy

facts. Pages 63, 64, 65, is perhaps too strong. The same may be said of other systems of morality; they who embrace them, and live unsuitably, are hypocrites, page 65, lines 2d and 3d.

Upon the whole, I heartily wish every Christian, especially every minister in the kingdom, would carefully read this very useful treatise of Witherspoon's, and act accordingly; and if I had any acquaintance with him, though I am hopeless of bringing *you* over to my sentiments, I would endeavour at least to prevail on *him* to abolish the phrase *imputed righteousness* in the next edition, and then his book would be more extensively useful.

I am, my dear friend, (notwithstanding our different opinions in some religious points), with much real esteem, most affectionately and most sincerely yours, &c. &c.

So far my correspondent, whose letter I shall forbear to answer till I hear your sentiments; which I shall expect by the first opportunity. I am sure, if the phrase *imputed righteousness* were not strictly defensible on scriptural grounds, it should never more be used, either in the pulpit, or in the writings of, dear sir, your obliged friend and servant.

LETTER CCV.

Weston-Favell, Oct. 24. 1758.

My dear Friend,—Let me repeat my thanks for the trouble you have taken, and for the assistance you have given me, in relation to my controversy with Mr Wesley. He is so unfair in his quotations, and so magisterial in his manner, that I find it no small difficulty to preserve the decency of the gentleman, and the meekness of the Christian, in my intended answer. May our divine Master aid me in both these instances, or else not suffer me to write at all.

I have just been reading Hab. iii. 13. which seem-

ed difficult to clear; one of the metaphors referring to an animate, the other to an inanimate structure: I should be glad to know, how you understand, and how you would explain the passage. Perhaps, at your leisure, you will consider the whole chapter; and when I ask for a descant upon one, give me an elucidation of twenty verses.

I have certainly a very great esteem for Dr Gill, yet I never could assent to his notion of eternal justification. I am very much obliged to you for pointing out to me the passage in Theron and Aspasio which seems to favour, or proceeds upon such a tenet. It shall be altered in the next edition.

My dilatory proceedings you will ascribe to the real cause, sickness; then you will not deal with me according to the law of retaliation, but according to that law of kindness, which the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ has written upon your heart.

Indeed, I think your arguments are unanswerable. If so, do not you think there are some things in my third Dialogue exceptionable? I wish you would examine it; bring it to the touchstone of your last letter, and where it is wrong correct it.

I should like to have Theron object something in your way of argumentation, and Aspasio frankly confess that he has overshot the mark. Such an acknowledgment endears the character of the speaker, and such a circumstance makes the sentiment more impressive on the reader.

I have often thought the second verse of Psalm cxxxi. very difficult, and have been at a loss to find out the propriety of the comparison. Why composed and quiet as a weaned child, when we know, that the time of weaning children is always a time of disappointment, often of disease? At this season they are particularly froward and peevish: The very reverse, therefore, of that frame of mind which the Psalmist seems to be illustrating. This was the best solution which occurred to my thoughts;—A child weaned from his mother is disquieted and fretful.

Such is my natural, and such would be my habitual temper, was I not influenced and calmed by grace; but, through divine grace, my mind is resigned and quiet as the weaned child, when brought back to the mother, and lulled to rest on that soft and warm bosom, where it had so often lain with the greatest delight, but from which it had been for a season withdrawn. You see I would translate, "in pectus sive gremium matris suæ." But whether my translation be warrantable, or my paraphrase such as suits the tenor of the Psalm, I submit to your determination.

Accept my sincere thanks for your valuable correction of a passage in my sermon: such improving animadversions will always be more acceptable than the inebriating voice of applause, far more acceptable to your truly affectionate friend.

LETTER CCVI.

Weston, Oct. 19. 1758.

My dear Friend,—You some time ago sent me a poem, with which I was much delighted, notwithstanding the uncouth metre and obsolete words; I mean Fletcher's Purple Island, to which were subjoined several other of his poetical pieces; one particularly I remember to his brother G. Fletcher, on his poem entitled Christ's Victory in Heaven and on Earth, and his Triumph over and after Death.

I happened to mention Fletcher to a gentleman lately, who has since lent me this very poem, which I longed to see, as the title pleased me so much. He tells me, that Phineas Fletcher was not only an excellent poet himself, and the son of a poet, (namely of John Fletcher, a celebrated dramatic writer in the reign of Queen Elizabeth) but brother to two eminent poets, of which this G. Fletcher was one, and a young student at Cambridge when he wrote this poem.

I wish any bookseller could be prevailed with to

reprint the Purple Island, and add to it Christ's Victory, &c. in one neat volume. I believe it would sell, if properly revised and altered. It grieves me to think these pieces should be lost to the world, and be for ever buried in obscurity.

I have folded down several passages in Christ's Victory and Triumph for your inspection; and if they meet with your approbation, I hope you will join your interest with me, in endeavouring to preserve the work from perishing. The Purple Island is to be sure a superior poem, and abounds with picturesque, useful, and striking sentiments; but with that you are well acquainted, as it has so long been a favourite with you.

I am now so very ill, that I scarce think I shall live to see the approaching Christmas.* Had I been in perfect health, and disengaged from other employment, I question whether I should not have retouched the poetry, changed several of the obsolete words, illustrated the obscure passages by occasional notes, and run the risk of publishing the whole at my own expense. To this I should have been more particularly inclined, as there are so few poems of the scriptural kind wrote by men of genius; though no subject can be equally sublime and instructive, or more entertaining; witness Milton's Paradise Lost, and Pope's Messiah.

Could not Rivington get some one to make these necessary alterations? Or if he does not care to engage in it, would not Dodsley undertake it, who is himself a poet, and very capable of abridging it in some places, enlarging it in others, and thoroughly correcting the whole? Do you know Mr Joseph Wharton of Trinity College, Oxford, who translated Virgil? He is very capable of doing this: and as he is a clergyman, I should imagine he would think his time well employed in thus contributing to our blessed Master's honour.

* Mr Hervey died on Christmas day, according to his own supposition.

Methinks if a subscription to modernize valuable authors, and thus rescue them from the pit of oblivion, was properly set on foot by some men of eminence, and the proposals well drawn up, it would meet with due encouragement. I have often wondered that such an attempt has never yet been made. How many excellent books of the last century are now out of print, whilst such a number of useless and pernicious writings are continually published?

I now spend almost my whole time in reading and praying over the Bible. Indeed, indeed you cannot conceive, how the springs of life in me are relaxed and relaxing. "What thou dost, do quickly," is for me a proper admonition, as I am so apprehensive of my approaching dissolution. My dear friend, attend to "the one thing needful." With this I send you my heart, its warmest good wishes, and most tender affections; and till it ceases to beat, I shall never cease to pray for your abundant happiness, or to be, my dear sir, your sincerely affectionate friend, &c.

Some of the passages mentioned in the preceding letter to have been folded down by Mr Hervey, were as follow.

In the three following stanzas, the poet speaks of man, as destitute of all hope and remedy without Christ.

Should any to himself for safety fly?
The way to save himself (if any were)
Is to fly from himself. Should he rely
Upon the promise of his wife? what there,
What can he see, but that he most may fear—
A syren, sweet to death? Upon his friends?
Who what he needs, or what he hath not, lends?
Or, wanting aid himself, aid to another sends?

His strength? 'tis dust. His pleasure? cause of pain.
His hope? false courtier. Youth or beauty? brittle.
Entreaty? fond. Repentance? late and vain.
Just recompense? the world were all too little.
Thy love? he hath no title to a tittle.

Hell's force? in vain her furies hell shall gather.
His servants, kinsmen, or his children rather?
His child (if good) shall judge; if bad, shall curse his father.

His life? that brings him to his end, and leaves him.
His end? that leaves him to begin his wo.
His goods? what good in that which so deceives him?
His gods of wood? their feet, alas! are slow
To go to help, which must be help'd to go.
Honour, great worth? ah! little worth they be
Unto their owners. Wit? that makes him see
He wanted wit, who thought he had it wanting thee.*

In another place, repentance and faith are thus described:

She* in an arbour sate
Of thorny brier, weeping her cursed state,
And her before a hasty river fled,
Which her blind eyes with faithful penance fed,
And all about the grass with tears hung down its head.

Her eyes, though blind abroad, at home kept fast,
Inwards they turn'd and look'd into her head,
At which she often started as aghast,
To see so fearful spectacles of dread;
And with one hand her breast she martyred,
Wounding her heart the same to mortify;
The other a fair damsel† held her by,
Which if but once let go, she‡ sunk immediately.

In another place is shewn the sufficiency of Christ, and impotency in man.

What hath man done, that man shall not undo,
Since God to him is grown so near akin?
Did his foe slay him? he shall slay his foe.
Has he lost all? he all again shall win.
Is sin his master? he shall master sin.
Too hardy soul with sin the field to try,
The only way to conquer was to fly;
But thus long death hath lived, and now death's self shall die.

Christ is a path, if any be misled;
He is a robe, if any naked be;
If any chance to hunger he is bread;
If any be a bondman, he is free.
If any be but weak, how strong is he?

* Christ. † Repentance. ‡ Faith. || Repentance.

To dead men, life he is; to sick men, health;
To blind men, sight; and to the needy, wealth;
A pleasure without loss; a treasure without stealth.

Despair, Presumption, Vain-glory, &c. &c. are personified in different parts of the poem; but the preceding and following stanzas will be sufficient to give the reader an idea of it; and therefore it would be unnecessary to quote all the passages to which Mr Hervey had referred.

Ere long they came near to a baleful bower,*
Much like the mouth of that infernal cave,
Which gaping stood all comers to devour,
Dark, doleful, dreary, like a greedy grave
That still for carrion-carcasses doth crave.
The ground no herbs but venomous did bear,
Nor ragged trees did leaf, but every-where
Dead bones and skulls were cast, and bodies hanged were.

Upon the roof the bird of sorrow sat,
Keeping back joyful day with her sad note,
And through the shady air the fluttering bat
Did wave her leathern sails, and blindly float;
While with her wings the fatal screech-owl smote
The unblessed house: there on a craggy stone
Celæno † hung, and made a direful moan,
And all about the murder'd ghosts did shriek and groan.

Like cloudy moon-shine in some shadowy grove,
Such was the light in which Despair did dwell;
But he himself with night for darkness strove,
His black uncombed locks dishevell'd fell
About his face; through which as brands of hell
Sunk in his skull, his staring eyes did glow,
Which made him deadly look: their glimpse did show
Like cockatrice's eyes, that sparks of poison throw.

Now he would dream that he from heaven fell,
And then would snatch the air, afraid to fall;
And now he thought he sinking was to hell,
And then would grasp the earth; and now his stall
To him seem'd hell, and then he out would crawl:
And ever as he crept would squint aside,
Lest he should be by fiends from hell espied,
And forced, alas! in chains for ever to abide.

* The habitation of Despair described.
† One of the Harpies.

Insulæ Ionio in magno: quas dira Celæno,
Harpyiæque colunt aliæ. *Virg. Æn.* iii.

Christ's triumph over death, by his sufferings on the cross.

A tree was first the instrument of strife,
  Where Eve to sin her soul did prostitute;
A tree is now the instrument of life,
  Though ill that trunk and Christ's fair body suit:
  Ah, cursed tree! and yet, oh blessed fruit!
That death to him, *this* life to us doth give;
Strange is the cure, when things past cure revive,
And the Physician dies to make his patient live.

Christ's triumph over death by his passion in the garden.

So may we oft a tender father see,
  To please his wanton son, his only joy,
Coast all about to catch the roving bee,
  And, stung himself, his busy hands employ
  To save the honey for the gamesome boy:
Or from the snake her rancorous teeth erase,
Making his child the toothless serpent chase,
Or with his little hands her swelling crest embrace.

Thus Christ himself to watch and sorrow gives,
  While dew'd in easy sleep dead Peter lies:
Thus man in his own grave securely lives,
  While Christ alive with thousand horrors dies,
  Yet more for ours than his own pardon cries.
No sins he had, yet all our sins he bare;
So much doth God for others' evils care,
And yet so careless men for their own evils are.

The treachery of Judas is thus represented:

See drowsy Peter, see where Judas wakes,
  Where Judas kisses him whom Peter flies;
O kiss, more deadly than the sting of snakes!
  False love, more hurtful than true injuries!
  Ah me! how dearly God his servant buys!
For God his man at his own blood doth hold,
And man his God for thirty pence hath sold:
So tin for silver goes, and dunghill-dross for gold.

The spirits of just men made perfect, are very poetically described in the following stanza:

No sorrow now hangs clouding on their brow;
  No bloodless malady empales the face:
No age drops on their hairs his silver snow;

No nakedness their bodies does embase;
No poverty themselves and theirs disgrace;
No fear of death the joy of life devours;
No unchaste sleep their precious time deflowers:
No loss, no grief, no change wait on their winged hours.

LETTER CCVII.

Weston-Favell, Nov. 7. 1758.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—I SHOULD be very ungrateful, if I did not thank you for your late present; and for the many obliging things you are pleased to say of me and my writings, in your valuable letter. I hope they will be successful advocates for the furtherance of the gospel; and I am very sorry to hear by you, as well as from several other of my correspondents in Scotland, that the gentlemen of letters in that kingdom are deplorably gone off from the simplicity and truth of the Scriptures, and that the Socinian tenets are gaining ground apace. I could wish, methinks, at this critical juncture, that Alsop's* Anti-Sozzo, which made its first appearance in 1675, was judiciously abridged, and, in the neat Glasgow type, reprinted in a duodecimo volume; though it is almost a pity to abridge it, (unless it was well executed), as the whole is so interesting, and might be contained in two duodecimo volumes, or even in one octavo volume, if printed at Glasgow. It is, I can assure you, a very smart book, and one of the best defences of the evangelical doctrines I ever saw, or ever expect to see, even if my life, which now draws very near its end, could be prolonged to the next century. In short, I think it an unanswerable performance; and divines of every denomination would do well to make themselves thoroughly masters of this spirited and entertaining writer, as they would then be able to defend the truth as it is in Jesus against all kind of opponents,

* Anti-Sozzo, or against Socinus (Faustus), a native of Sienna, whose Italian name was Sozzo. He wrote a book about 1575, entitled, De Jesu Christo Servatore, and died 1604.

how witty, keen, subtle, or malignant soever the attack might be. I would therefore beg you to recommend this book as a specific against Socinianism, and use your interest to have it forthwith reprinted at Glasgow.

Glad I am to be informed, that you are so very zealous for the honour and interest of our Lord Jesus Christ. What can make mankind happy, but his gospel? What is worthy of our sedulous application, but his interest? What will be a substantial reward, but his acceptance, favour, and love?

I am now reduced to a state of infant weakness, and given over by my physician. My grand consolation is to meditate on Christ; and I am hourly repeating those heart-reviving lines of Dr Young, in his fourth night.

> This, only this, subdues the fear of death:
> And what is this? Survey the wondrous cure;
> And at each step let higher wonder rise!
> 1. Pardon for infinite offence! 2. and pardon
> Through means that speak its value infinite!
> 3. A pardon bought with blood! 4. With blood divine!
> 5. With blood divine of him I made my foe!
> 6. Persisted to provoke! 7. Though woo'd and aw'd,
> Bless'd and chastised, a flagrant rebel still!
> 8. A rebel 'midst the thunders of his throne!
> 9. Nor I alone! 10. A rebel universe:
> 11. My species up in arms! 12. Not one exempt.
> 13. Yet for the foulest of the foul he dies!
> 14. Most joy'd for the redeem'd from deepest guilt!
> 15. As if our race were held of highest rank;
> And Godhead dearer, as more kind to man.

These amazingly comfortable lines, I dare say, you will treasure up in your heart; and when you think of them, will think of me; and I hope, dear sir, pray for me, that I may not disgrace my ministry, or dishonour the gospel of my Master in my last moments, by unbelief! base provoking unbelief! This probably is the last time you will ever hear from me: for indeed it is with some difficulty I have wrote now; but I shall not fail to remember you in my intercessions for my friends at the throne of

Christ; and I humbly beg of God Almighty, that the love of his Son may sweetly constrain you, and that his promises may be ever operative on your mind.—I am, with great gratitude and much esteem, reverend and dear sir, your affectionate brother in Christ.

LETTER CCVIII.

Friday morning.

Dear Sir,—You ask me what I think of you, in case it should please God to take you out of the world in the perplexed state you have described to me. An answer to such a question is much more difficult than you seem to be aware of; and therefore I must beg leave to decline passing any sentence. We ministers are to teach, warn, comfort, and exhort every man, according to God's most holy word; but after death comes the judgment on each of us. For, alas! how little, how very little do we know of one another, or of ourselves! The most amazing, perhaps, and one of the most humbling considerations too, which can well be offered to the human mind, is, that though we cannot form a tolerable judgment of any man's real condition, yet God shall judge the world, the whole world, in equity; not so much as one single case, how intricate soever it may seem to us, will he mistake. He was, is, and ever shall be, omniscient and omnipresent. And yet, short-sighted creatures as we are, how often do we usurp this prerogative, and presume to judge our fellow-creatures? A certain author, whose name I forgot, (though I registered to the following effect from him in one of my old diaries), has observed, "That it is impossible for us mortals to form an equitable judgment of the state of any one individual; because God alone knows all the circumstances he has been, and now is in. He alone can be the proper judge of his abilities and powers; [illegible] opportunities he had of improving himself,

doing good; what were the force of his temptations; what difficulties he had to struggle with; what portion of divine grace was given to him; what natural understanding he had; what acquired knowledge was or could be obtained by him; and, in short, what the true state of his case was. Nor will he condemn any one unjustly or arbitrarily. How comfortable a reflection is this! especially to one who is cruelly persecuted, or unjustly censured—that God shall judge the world in equity; and yet what a tremendous thought is it, that every day we live we provoke this Judge of all men, and increase our heap of sin, which swells into such a frightful size, such a stupendous mountain of guilt, as will make us one day stand amazed at the sight of it! But 'what art thou, O thou great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain,' Zech. iv. 7. 'We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins.' Oh! that I may have a devout and lively faith in him, as it is by him alone my sins can be cancelled. May the cry of his blood drown their clamour!—We are, most just God, the children of thy wrath, and he is the Son of thy love, who died to save us, and through whom thou art willing to receive us. Yet what a distrustful fainting of mind comes over me, on the remembrance of former transgressions, which neither a reflection on God's ineffable goodness, nor on the unbounded value of the sacrifice of Christ, can effectually relieve? 'Hear me, O Lord God, in this my hour of heartfelt distress, nor take thou vengeance of my sins; spare thy creature, O Lord, spare him whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood; let thy mighty Spirit fit me for mercy and acceptance, and be not, oh! be not angry with me for ever.'"

With this prose quotation, I send you a copy of verses on the renovation of a sinner; which will, perhaps, at this time, be neither unacceptable nor unseasonable. It was wrote by a very particular

friend of mine, and is as poetical as it is instructive and consolatory.

I.

When, with my mind devoutly press'd,
Dear Saviour! my revolving breast
Would past offences trace;
Trembling I make the black review,
Yet pleased behold, admiring too,
The power of changing grace.

II.

This *tongue*, with blasphemies defiled,
These *feet*, to erring paths beguiled,
In heavenly league agree;
Who would believe such *lips* could praise,
Or think my dark and winding ways
Should ever lead to thee?

III.

These *eyes*, that once abused their sight,
Now lift to thee their watery light,
And weep a silent flood:
These *hands* ascend in ceaseless prayer,
Oh! wash away the stains they wear
In pure, redeeming blood!

IV.

These *ears*, that pleased could entertain
The midnight oath, the lustful strain,
When round the festal board;
Now deaf to all the enchanting noise,
Avoid the throng, detest the joys,
And long to hear thy word.

V.

Thus art thou served: in every part,
Oh! wouldst thou but transform my *heart*,
That drossy thing refine;
That *grace* might *nature's* strength control,
And a new creature, body, soul,
Be *all*, be ever thine.

I transcribed these verses, as I hope you will commit them to your memory, and often repeat them as you ride or walk, till your tongue, lips, eyes, ears, and very heart, are subservient to the great end of your salvation, and that of others. Exert yourself; be of good cheer, the clouds that darken the face of your affairs, will ere long disperse. He that gave his blood for you, and refused not to bear the racking agonies of the cross for you; he will not leave

you, nor forsake you. God, who is faithful and just, has promised to forgive us our sins through the mediation of his Son. Lord, I believe this; help thou our unbelief.—So wishes, and so prays, yours very sincerely.

LETTER CCIX.

Weston-Favell, Monday morning.

DEAR SIR,—I AM much obliged to you for the loan of Dr Squire's Inquiry into the Foundation of the English Constitution. The performance seems to be curious, useful, and interesting. But how interesting soever the subject may be to others, it can be very little so now to me; as my indisposition is daily increasing, and must, in all human probability, soon put an end to my being.

In spite of the sarcastical reflections you say are thrown upon me, I must recommend to every one Marshall on Sanctification, and Jenks's Submission to the righteousness of God. These are with me the two fundamental books; these teach vital religion. Do they who would decry faith, and extol their good works, distinguish themselves by the practice of them? If not, I must beg leave to say, they are self-condemned. Only observe for the next month (by their fruits you will know them) the conduct of those who are such loud advocates for the merit, the dignity of man, and the freedom of his action; and of those who rely on the active and passive obedience of Christ: and then tell me ingenuously, which are the people that pay the greatest reverence to the word of God; and in particular to the fourth commandment? Inquire which of them use family-prayer? whose conversation is most edifying? which of them visit and travel on Sundays? and which of them pass that holy day as becomes those who have named the name of Christ? I will be bold to say, that, on an impartial examination, the majority will be found on the side of those who embrace the doc-

trine of the imputation of Christ's righteousness, and who expect salvation by him alone, and not by deeds which they have done. Yet I should wonder how men of discernment (men who, one would think, should be daily sensible of their innumerable failings) could possibly espouse the opposite doctrines, had I not too many melancholy proofs to the contrary. You may safely confide in this doctrine; for this, dear sir, is not to be considered as the particular opinion of James Hervey, but it is the general opinion of our exemplary reformers; it is the doctrine of our Articles and our Homilies. Will you say that our modern moral Christians, if I may so call them, are to be set in competition with men like these? I appeal to facts. Mark the effect of preaching mere morality, and of preaching the grace of Christ. But so long as the devil is suffered to deceive the nations, and so long as the heart is unconvinced of sin, we may assure ourselves the doctrines of justification by Christ's righteousness, and salvation by free grace, will meet with opposition. Therefore St Paul exhorts Timothy, Αγωνιζε τον καλον αγωνα της πιστεως, "to fight the good fight of faith:" it is an address to a combatant, and supposes a conflict; a noble conflict; καλος, the finest word in the most expressive language, importing all that is good and great; let us not then be ashamed of the cause.

My cough is very troublesome. I can get little rest; medicines yield no relief; but my never-failing cordial is the love of Christ.

> Religion bears my spirits up;
> A faithful and unchanging God
> Lays the foundation for my hope,
> In oaths,* in promises,† in blood.‡
>
> WATTS' HYMNS, b. i.

Staynoe (see Let. cxxx), whom you inquire after, was a good man, a tutor at Trinity College, Oxford, and afterwards Rector of St Leonard, Foster-lane; and in the year 1704 published, in two volumes

* Heb. vi. 17. † 2 Pet. i. 4. ‡ Rev. i. 5.

octavo, his treatise on Salvation by Jesus Christ. Mine is the second edition. It is no contemptible book, though the style is rather too prolix, and he has some peculiar notions. But who has ever seen a faultless book? All writers have their failings, more or less. No mortal is exempted from them; not even Homer, Virgil, or Milton himself. This ought to teach us candour and humility in such a state of imperfection; and above all, it should inspire us with a reverential admiration of the *book of God*, which alone is free from error; by which we are guided into all truth; and in which we are promised eternal life, procured for us by the righteousness, sufferings, and mediation of Jesus Christ. I wish, most heartily wish, you may sufficiently regard this inestimable book; and then you will be like the tree planted by the water-side, which bringeth forth its fruits in due season; and like that happy man of whom it is written by the Psalmist, "Look! whatsoever he doeth, it shall prosper." I am, my dear friend, affectionately and unalterably yours, &c.

JACOBI HERVEY

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EPISTOLA

AD CAROLUM THAYER.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS epistle was published by John Rivington, Mr Hervey's bookseller, in 1766, and sold at 6d. The following advertisement is prefixed to it.

"The design of this publication is to acquaint the reader with the late ingenious Mr Hervey's sentiments on the book of Job; and it is given to the community in the language with which it was penned, as a specimen of this author's Latin style; but as it has never been corrected, it is presumed that the candid reader will make proper allowances for its defects.

"N. B.—The original letter (without the least variation) was transmitted to the press by the Rev. Mr Robert Knight, rector of Weston-Favell in Northamptonshire, who married Mr Hervey's youngest sister; and it is now deposited in the hands of Mr Rivington, for the satisfaction of such as desire to be assured of its authenticity."

The translation of this excellent letter, which now makes its first appearance in print, was undertaken by the printer, at the desire of several gentlemen, who conceived that the inserting the Latin copy of it only in our author's works, would be of no use

to the generality of the encouragers of this edition. Though the translator does not pretend that the translation is any way equal to the original, yet he flatters himself he has given the author's meaning, which may be of use to the unlearned. Those who are skilled in the learned languages will prefer the original, and cannot be displeased that Mr Hervey is also made to speak in English to those who do not understand Latin.

REVERENDO VIRO

CAROLO THAYER,

SALUTEM.

Miror equidem, vir spectatissime, tantam tibi linguæ non vernaculæ, quæque ab hodiernis colloquiis exulat, copiam in promptu esse. Ni te jamdudum nossem, uberrima ista Romani eloquii penus facile me induceret ut crederem, Tusculi* te potius quam Abingtoniæ† habitasse. Quod ad me attinet, quum probe sciam, quam rudis sim et inexercitatus in hoc scribendi genere, paulum abfuit quin silentium mihi perpetuum indixissem. Per plurimos dies, tenuitatis nostræ conscius, manum de tabula timidam cohibui. Verum enimvero pudor reclamavit, animusque ab ingratitudine abhorrens stimulos addidit; atque inde sit ut calamus, impar licet et ineptus, ad epistolare munus jam tandem excitatus est.

Gratias itaque ago, quantas possum maximas, quod plurima mihi notatu dignissima de Jobo, Jobique libro, pro singulari tua humanitate atque eruditione, vitro communicasti. Versionem imprimis ad examen revocas. Nitida ea est, elegantiarum ferax, vimque Hebræarum vocum, supra quod sperari potuit, vix imminutam tradit. Addas licet, novam eam esse in plurimis, sed quæ auctoritatem suam secum afferat, et legentium suffragia primo statim ab intuitu adscis-

* Tusculum, urbs Italica, ubi villa Ciceronis.

† Abingtonia, oppidulum prope Northamtoniam.

cit. Notas deinde sagaci percurris oculo. Quas qui legit religitque, haud facile est dicere, utrum plus sit reportaturus utilitatis, ex amplissima orientalis eruditionis segete; seu potius oblectamenti, a dulcissimo illo criticæ artis flore. Adeo non frivola sunt et futilia quæ ubique annotantur, ut vocabulorum emphasin, argumentorum pondera, sensuum sublimitatem, colloquii denique telam pulcherrimo ordine deductam, manu limatissima admota collustrant. Imo tanto affuso lumine collustrant, ut vel mihi hebetioris ingenii viro patescant, et patefacta placeant. Quid multis? eum ipsum, puto, commentatorem nactus est Jobus, quem præ omnibus aliis optasset, si superstes adhuc inter homines versaretur.

De Jobi ævo, quo vixit, non constat inter doctos, neque opinor constabit unquam. Atqui verisimilima videtur quam tu aliique tuentur opinio. In vestras partes non invitus transeo. Illustrem hunc principem non nisi post Abrahamum floruisse certo certius est. Qui enim nomen terræ dedit, quam alter amicorum coluit, Temanitidi, is inter Esaui posterus numeratur. Prohibet porro insignissimum istud encomium quo cohonestatur a Spiritu Sancto, ne suspicemur eum diebus patriarcharum Isaaci aut Jacobi vitam transegisse. Vix potuit vere dice "CI AIN CTHU CADING" nisi post funera Josephi. Inter hunc igitur morte ablatum, et Mosen ex ephebis excessum, omnino statuendo videtur æra Jobi.

De scripto ipso, profluxisse illud ab alia quam Jobi manu nullus dubito. Is quippe inter Arabas nutritus, atque Arabum linguæ assuefactus, vix tanta fuit Hæbraicarum literarum peritia imbutus, quanta opus erat ad res tales tali verborum nitore et concinnitate consignandas chartis. Si Mosi authori librum ascribere quis maluit, quod Anglicana nostra in observatiunculis suis margini affixis editio innuit, tum demum arbitror ante Israelitas per deserta traductos confectum esse. Legislator ille celeberrimus dum tanto agmini ducem se rectoremque præbuit, vix potuit ad historiam poeticam contexendam ani-

mum appellere. Ingens præterea rerum quotidie agendarum multitudo atque onus, ne tale aliquid moliretur, mentem sine dubio abstraherent. Nulla autem ea potuit opportunior esse occasio, quæ illi obtigit, dum exul inter Midianitas commoratus est. Rusticabatur tunc temporis; otiabatur; omnia habuit indulta, quæ poetæ ingenium stimulare atque accendere solent. Huic insuper sententiæ adstipulatur, quod in eas regiones relegatus, omnia quæ ad Jobum, finitimæ terræ incolam, pertinerent, ediscere potuit uberius. Gnaviter quoque pro tali conjectura militat frequentior exotici idiomatis usus, phrasiumque varietas Arabicam, indolem plane redolentium. Warburtonus noster omni nisu id agit, ut Esræ, scriptorum sacrorum ultimo, thesaurarium hoc theologiæ, philosophiæ, atque omnigenæ fere doctrinæ acceptum referamus. Quæ quidem hypothesis, speciosa licet, et rationibus neutiquam contemnendis subnixa, fidem apud me non optinet. Signa enim sunt (ni vanus auguror) et criteria, passim per librum sparsa, quæ ætatem longe antiquiorem subindicant. Ad legem latam aut res gestas Israelitarum ne allusum est, quod mihi videre contigit, uspiam. Nullibi vel mentio fit miraculorum in Ægypto et per deserta editorum. Que tantum cuivis poemati conciliarent decus, tantum porro Judæis solamen suppeditarent, ut a nemine cordato intacta prorsus relinquerentur. Inter alia quæ scripsisti pulcherrima, τὴν γνησιότητα toti huic historiæ adstruis. Adeo non esse asseris, assertumque probas, fictitium quendam pii ingenii lusum, ut omnia e contra revera agerentur. Proinde non debere aliquem inter legendum putare, sibi ante oculos esse ejus solius quod fieri potuit figmentum, sed genuinam ejus quod fuit narrationem. Me jam antea huic opinioni accedentem, fecerunt quas protulisti rationes, ut ei arctius adhæream. Etsi vero historiæ veritatem sibi vindicet, dramatici tamen operis lepores præ se fert. Voces si spectes, ornatissimæ illæ cultissimæque, non tam enarrant, quam res conspiciendas ferme exhibent. Sensibus autem nihil gra-

vius, grandius, sublimius, Deo inspirante dignius, aut humano generi magis scitu necessarium. Characterum interea diversitas mira; quodque artis est summæ, ad vivum depicti singuli, et sibi invicem undique constantes. Altera insuper venustatis specie gaudet Jobæis nostra, quæ artificiosis dramaticorum commentis decori est atque ornamento. Non fumum ex fulgore, quod monuit criticus, sed ex fumo lucem edit. Sermone pedestri orditur. Inde pedetentim progreditur ad altiores dicendi modos. Et cothurno induto, sensibus quoque assurgit. Rerum major nascitur ordo. Vehementiores congressus. Acriora conflictantium certamina. Usque dum nihil amplius aut fortius hinc illinc dici potuit. Tum demum intervenit moderator. Quæ prave dicta sunt utrinque subacto pensitat judicio, debitaque reprehensione castigat. Summa, si fieri potest, ope nititur, ut fervidos disputantium animos componat, litemque diu agitatam dirimat. Sed frustra. Major inest nodus, et difficilioris longe solutionis, quam ut juveni remonstranti cedat. DEUS, ecce DEUS adest! quidquamne augustius excogitari possit? Qui circuitus cœlorum perambulat, in arenam quasi (constet summa reverentia dicto) descendit. Quique astra per inane volventia librat, ILLE IPSE controversiæ hujus momenta et pondera æqua quasi bilance trutinat. DEO autem orante causam, ut ferocientes animi subsidunt! reniti cessant. Manus dant. Obmutescunt. Jobus ipse, quem lautiores de sua puritate tumidique nimis conceptus, ultra quam par erat, vexerant, erroris convictus, iniquitatis manifestus, pudore suffunditur, arma projicet, ad pedes infinitæ misericordiæ venerabundus devolvitur. Noscit seipsum; pœnitentiam agit; cedendo vincit; eumque, simul atque se coram DEO humillime deprimit, calamitatis sortitus est exitum, quem nefas esset expectare, dum inculpatam sibi integritatem temere nimis arrogavit. Omnia sua, non ita pridem misere deperdita, cumulatissima manu reponit, auget, stabilitque numen propitium. Palmæ ad instar, pressus resur-

git; quamque omnes de felicitate sua conclamatum iri arbitrabantur, tum demum rediviva evasit, multoque, quam olim, lætius efloruit. Quam subitanea atque insperata prorsus catastrophe! quam jucundus malorum finis! quam pulchra coronis toto operi superinducta!

Leviter hæc tetigisse sufficiat. A rebus curiosæ speculationis, tuo ductus exemplo, ad utiliora longe mentem calamumque verto. Quæ fidem vacillantem suffulciant, praximque errabundam nimis gubernatoris solertis ritu ad clavum assidue sedentis, corrigant dirigantque, ea nunc consideranda occurrunt. Quod prudenter mones, de ediscenda animi fortitudine ex Jobo afflictionum agminibus lacessito, nec tamen fracto aut prostrato; de petendis insuper ad patientiam incitamentis ex Jobo mala acerbissima passo, atque humiliter se et summisse ferendo oneri accingente; id avide aripio; memoria defixum teneo; Deumque precor ut in ima atque intima cordis transeat. Nobilissimum illud quod resurrectioni* mortuorum perhibetur testimonium, te eo remittente meditationes nostras, libenter adeo. Quamque aliqui, de re Christiana non bene meriti, monumentum istud ære perennius, auro pretiosius convellere satagunt, pergratam sane operam navat interpres noster, dum validissimis rationum viribus id sibi stabiliendum accipit. Non te latet fuisse inter eruditos, qui pulcherrimam hanc Jobinæ fidei confessionem aliorsum detorquere student; et de fortunis solummodo redintegratis ut intelligatur velint. Quem quidem errorem radicitus avulsum et funditius deletum, non sine gaudio et gratulatione, in lucubrationibus hisce accuratissimis contemplari datum est. Quod mihi de Redemptore "CALI" suggeris, id profecto arridet magnopere, et toto pectore amplector. Vellem de quocunque sacrorum voluminum libro dicere, quod olim Augustinus optime, "Sunt Scripturæ tuæ deliciæ meæ." Nulla est inter codices divinos pagina, quæ non aurifodinis sit præstantior; nulla vel minutissima

* Vide Jobi, cap. xix. 25.

inspiratæ veritatis portiuncula, quin melle Hyblæo dulcior longe. Quæ autem de CHRISTO vaticinantur; CHRISTUM sive venturum spondent, sive adventum depingunt; CHRISTUM, ægris me delam, lugentibus solatium, vicariam pro sontibus victimam, ἀντίλυτρον, ἀντίψυχον, ea, apud me, infinitum quantum! palmam præripiunt. Renident ea margaritarum instar hinc inde coruscantium; sive, ut cum poeta loquar, velut inter ignes luna minores. De his colloquia apud ædes privatas, de his pro rostro conciones, de his denique contemplationes domi, foris, instituere gestirum. Imo in his totus essem, atque immorarer jugiter, nisi corruptela, proh dolor! naturæ insita obstaret; vagæque ac instabiles cogitationes mentem in contraria identidem deflecterent. Hæc enim edidicisse, sapientia est; his fidem adhibuisse, salus. Qui hæc ad unguem callet, bonus evadet theologus; quique animo penitius imbibit, Christianus.

At quo feror? In quæ spatia effusus, trans limites epistolaris commercii excurro? Reprimo me tandem. Unum duntaxat præ aliis eximium, e versione antea laudata, locum seligere liceat. Ea erit scriptiunculæ hujus nostræ meta, et patientiæ tuæ lassæ plus satis et defatigatæ levamen. Verum ibi pristinumque sensum, acerrimo ingenii acumine e tenebris erutum, et non sine magno sanæ doctrinæ commodo repositum, lætus aspicio. Pericopam, si vacat, videre es, cap. iv. 17. Num mortalis *a* (non *præ*, ut nostras se habet hic saltem malefida versio) numine justus erit? Haud memini legisse me, aut narrando accepisse, ab ullo unquam, eo impudentiæ deventum iri, ut justiorem se Deo, perfectionis omnimodæ fonte ac norma, venditare ausit. Vix igitur, imo ne vix quidem operæ pretium fuisset, tanto cum conamine dictorum et pompa refellere, quod in nullius quotquot sunt mortalium cogitationes introire potuit. Neque aliud quam nugatorem agit scriptor divinus, si fidem redditioni receptæ habes; sin vero Schultensii admittas, non item. Exhibet ista nodum deo vindice dignum. Errorem perstringit jugulatque, quo nullus alius

exitialior, quive importunius sese in mentes nostras ingerit. Speciem omnem humani, quod vocatur, meriti tollit, convellit, conculcat. Neque sinit, ut minima vel sanctissimis hominum, aut sua junctandi, aut se justificandi, ansa sit relicta. Quin omnes omnino, utcunque pietatis puritatisque encomiis per terras nobilitatos, coram supremo judice reos ανεπολογητους, sistit. Nullos proinde posse a tremendo illo tribunali pœnarum expertes abire, nisi gratuito iis condonentur peccata et CHRISTI Mediatoris justitia iis in salutem imputetur. Ecce revera evangelicum ante envangelium! Qui non cutem solam œconomiæ istius salutiferæ invenisset palpando, sed in ipsissima vicera et medullas quodammodo, penetrasse videtur. Felices nos nostrosque si eandem fidem medullitus hausisse detur! Amo mehercule hominem, qui feliciter commentando hæc tam luculenta ευαγγελια Jobo, Christianismo, nobisque etiam, aut inscitia Hebraicæ dictionis aut incuria interpretum ablata, instauravit demum ac restituit. Te vero impensius, vir reverende, amo atque colo; dulcissima cujus amicitia, plus una alteraque vice experimento cognita, fecit, ut amplissimam ex ea voluptatis atque emolumenti messem sperare, ac mihimet ipsi polliceri audeam. Ut vivas, valeasque, ex animo optat tibi devinctissimus

JACOBUS HERVEY.

P. S.—Si qua in re tibi, salute recuperata, prodesse potero, id ne dicam roges, sed jubeas velim.

TO THE

REV. MR CHARLES THAYER.

RESPECTED SIR,—TRULY I am surprised that you have so ready a faculty of expressing yourself in a language which is not your mother tongue, and which is banished from modern conversation. Unless I had been intimately acquainted with you long ago, that fruitful fund of Roman elocution would easily induce

me to believe that you had dwelt at Tusculum* rather than at Abingdon.† As to myself, well knowing my rudeness and want of exercise in this kind of writing, I was on the point of imposing a perpetual silence on myself. For several days, sensible of my own incapacity, I withheld my timorous hand from the desk. But indeed shame remonstrated, and a mind extremely averse to ingratitude, egged me on; and hence it is that my pen, though unequal and ill fitted for the task, is now at last excited to give you the trouble of a letter.

I render you my greatest thanks for your voluntarily communicating to me, out of your singular humanity and erudition, many remarks worthy of the highest notice concerning Job and his book. In the first place, you bring the version to the touchstone. It is neat, replete with elegance, and gives the force of the Hebrew phrases in their full strength, beyond any man's expectation. Add to this, that though it is new in most instances, yet it is what carries its authority in its bosom, and gains the reader's assent at the very first sight. Then you run over the notes with a sagacious eye. Which whoever reads, and reads over again, it is not easy to say whether he will carry off more profit from that very large crop of eastern learning, or rather delight from that most agreeable flower of the art of criticism. So that the remarks every-where interspersed are not trifling or unimportant, as they, with great ingenuity and skill, illustrate the emphasis of the words, the weight of the arguments, the sublimity of the meaning, and the thread of the discourse laid out in a most beautiful order. Nay, they shine with so glaring a light, that they are clearly understood even by me, a man of dull apprehension; and, being understood, please me. In short, Job, I fancy, has got the very commentator which he would have preferred to all others, if he himself had been now living and conversant among men.

* Tusculum, a town of Italy, where Cicero's country-house stood.
† Abingdon, a little town near Northampton.

As to the age in which Job lived, the learned are not agreed, nor I suppose ever will. But that opinion which you and others maintain seems to be most probable. I willingly go over to your side. Nothing is more certain than that this illustrious hero lived after Abraham: For he who gave a name to the country which one of his friends, the Temanite, inhabited, is reckoned among the posterity of Esau. Moreover, that very remarkable encomium with which he is honoured by the Holy Spirit, forbids us to imagine that he lived in the days of the patriarchs Isaac or Jacob. It could scarcely be truly said that there was none like him in the earth, unless he had lived after the death of Joseph. The time of Job seems therefore to be truly placed between the decease of Joseph and the manhood of Moses.

As to the writing itself, I have no doubt that it proceeded from no other hand than that of Job. For he being educated among the Arabs, and used to their language, he had scarce so great skill in the Hebrew learning as was necessary for consigning to writing such important matters in so neat and elegant a style. If any chuse to ascribe the book to Moses as its author, as our English edition has intimated in the notes on the margin, then I suppose it was wrote before the passage of the Israelites through the wilderness. While that celebrated lawgiver was employed as the guide and ruler of so great a company, he could scarce apply his mind to write a poetical history. Besides, the great number and weight of the matters he had to do every day, would, without doubt, divert his mind from so great an undertaking. And no time could be more favourable to him than that which he enjoyed while he lived as an exile among the Midianites. He dwelt in the country at that time, had much leisure, and had all conveniencies which use to stimulate and fire the genius of a poet. What further strengthens this opinion is, that being banished into those countries, he could have full information of every thing relating to Job, who dwelt

in the neighbouring land. The frequent use, too, of a foreign idiom, and a variety of phrases plainly smelling of the Arabian genius, plead strongly in behalf of such a conjecture. Our countryman, Dr Warburton, labours hard to prove that we are indebted to Ezra, the last of the sacred writers, for this treasure of divinity, philosophy, and all kind of learning. But this hypothesis, however specious, and supported by reasons nowise despicable, does not command my assent. For unless I guess wrong, there are marks and characters scattered every-where through the book which denote a much more ancient period. There is no where any allusion, so far as I could observe, to the promulgation of the law, or the exploits of the Israelites. In no place is there any mention of the miracles performed in Egypt or through the deserts, which would have given so great a dignity to any poem, and afforded so much comfort to the Jews, that they could never have passed unnoticed by any wise man. Among other very beautiful things that you have wrote, you establish the genuineness of this whole history. Consequently you do not assert it to be, and prove what you have asserted, a certain fictitious amusement of a pious genius, but that, on the contrary, it was a real transaction: that therefore no one, in reading, ought to imagine that he has before his eyes a fiction of what might have been done, but a genuine narrative of what actually happened. I was formerly of this opinion, and the reasons you have brought forth make me adhere more closely to it. But although it claims the truth of a real history, it displays all the pleasant entertainment of a dramatic performance. If you consider the words, which are most elegant and ornate, they do not so much relate, as exhibit to view, the several transactions. And nothing is more important, more grand, more sublime, more worthy of an inspiring God, or more necessary for mankind to know. Meantime, there is a surprising diversity of characters, and, what is the highest attainment of art, they

are every one painted to the life, and every-where consistent with one another. Moreover, our history of Job is distinguished by another species of elegance, which is a decoration and ornament to the artificial romances of dramatic writers. He does not bring smoke from a flash, as a critic has observed, but light from smoke. He begins with prose, and then in a trice he proceeds to the higher modes of speaking; and putting on a buskin, rises up to the senses. A greater order of things commences; more vehement conferences, more fierce attacks of the disputants, until nothing more important or more forcible can be said on either side. Then at last a mediator comes in. The perverse sayings of each party he weighs with a deliberate judgment, and chastises with due reprehension. He endeavours with his utmost might, if possible, to calm the warm spirits of the disputants, and decide a controversy that has been long litigated. But in vain. The difficulty is greater, and of far harder solution, than to yield to the remonstrance of a youth. A GOD, behold a God appears! Can any thing more majestic be contrived! He who traverses the circuits of the heavens descends, (let me speak with the utmost reverence), as it were, to the sand. And he who balances the stars that roll through the empty air, HE HIMSELF weighs the importance and weight of this controversy, as it were, in an impartial balance. While God pleads the cause, how do their fierce spirits subside! They cease to resist. They give up their weapons. They are mute. Job himself, whom too splendid and swelling conceptions of his own purity had transported beyond due bounds, being convinced of his mistake, and sensible of his iniquity, is covered with shame, throws down his arms, and, in a worshipping posture, falls prostrate at the feet of infinite mercy. He knows himself; exercises penitence, overcomes by submission; and as soon as he most humbly falls down before God, he obtains an end of his calamity, which he could not lawfully have expected so long as he

too rashly arrogated to himself an unblamable integrity. The propitious Deity, with a most liberal hand, replaces, augments, establishes all his effects, which had been not long ago miserably lost. Like the palm-tree, being pressed down he rises up; and when all were going to congratulate him upon his felicity, then at last it revived, and flourished much more plentifully than before. How sudden and unlooked-for a catastrophe! How joyful a period of his distresses! How beautiful a conclusion brought to the whole work!

Let it suffice to have touched these things slightly. Led by your example, I turn my mind and pen from matters of curious speculation to things of greater utility. Those things which support a tottering faith, and rectify and direct a practice too apt to wander, like a skilful pilot who continually sits at the helm, are now to become the subject of consideration. What you discreetly admonish of, as to learning fortitude of mind from Job teased with a troop of afflictions, yet not broken or dispirited; as to fetching incitements to patience from this man who suffered the most bitter evils, and yet prepared himself humbly and submissively to bear the burden; that I greedily catch at, I hold it fixed in my memory, and I pray to God, that it may penetrate into the lowest and innermost recesses of my heart. I cheerfully proceed, upon your remitting my meditations thither, to that most noble testimony which is given to the resurrection of the dead.† And while some who have not deserved well of Christianity labour to destroy this monument, more lasting than brass, and more precious than gold, our interpreter performs a truly acceptable service, while he undertakes to establish it by the most powerful arguments. You are not ignorant, that there have been some among the learned who endeavour to pervert to a different meaning this most beautiful confession of Job's faith, and would have it understood only of the restoration of his estate.

† See Job xix. 25.

Which error indeed I observed with no small joy and congratulation to be plucked up by the roots, and entirely overthrown in these your most accurate lucubrations. As to what you suggest to me concerning the Redeemer, it truly pleases me very much, and I embrace it with my whole heart. I would wish to say concerning every book of the sacred volumes, what Augustine long ago said excellently, "Thy writings are my delight." There is no page in the divine books which is not more excellent than mines of gold; there is not even the most minute portion of inspired truth, but is sweeter than the sweetest honey. But what they prophesy concerning CHRIST; whether they promise CHRIST to come, or describe his advent; CHRIST, medicine for the sick, comfort to mourners, a vicarious sacrifice for the guilty, a ransom for us, giving his life for us—these things, how infinitely great! carry away the prize. These things shine like pearls sparkling on every side, or, to speak with the poet, as the moon among the lesser stars. Concerning these, I would rejoice to hold conferences in private houses, in the pulpit, in my family, and when abroad. Nay, I would be wholly employed about them, unless the inbred corruption of nature (O grief!) opposed, and wandering and unsettled thoughts now and then diverted my mind to contrary subjects. For to learn these, is wisdom; to believe them, is salvation. He who understands these things exactly, will become a good divine; and he who drinks them into his mind, will become a Christian.

But whither am I carried? Into what excursions, transported, do I run beyond the limits of epistolary correspondence? I repress myself at length. Let me be permitted to select one place at least excellent above others, from the version before extolled; which will put a period to this little writing of mine, and relax your patience, too much tired and wearied out. There with pleasure I behold the true and ancient meaning, by a very brisk effort of genius, rescued

from darkness, and restored, not without considerable advantage, to sound doctrine. You may see the defect, if you be at leisure, chap. iv. ver. 17. "Shall mortal man be just before God?" not, more just than God,* as our version, unfaithful here at least, has it. I do not remember to have read, or to have received by report, that any one ever arrived to such a pitch of impudence, as to dare to boast that he was more just than God, the fountain and rule of all manner of goodness. Hardly, therefore, nay scarcely would it have been worth while to confute, with so great energy and pomp of words, what could enter into the thoughts of no mortals whatsoever. Nor does the divine writer act otherwise than as a trifler, if you believe the received version. But if you admit that of Schultens, he acts quite the reverse. That version discovers a difficulty worthy of a God to unravel. It decyphers and destroys an error, than which there is none more destructive, or that insinuates itself with greater importunity into our minds. It takes away, it refutes, it tramples upon every species of what is called human merit. Nor does it suffer even the least handle to be left to the holiest of men, either to boast of their own deeds, or to justify themselves. Nay it represents all men, however dignified through the world by the praises of piety and purity, as wholly guilty, and without excuse before the supreme Judge; and shews that none can go away from that tremendous tribunal free from punishment, unless their sins are freely forgiven them, and the righteousness of CHRIST the Mediator be imputed to them for their justification. Behold an evangelist indeed before the Gospel! who by feeling found out, not the sum only of that saving economy, but seems in a manner to have entered into the very bowels and marrow of it. Happy we and our people, if it be given us to draw forth the same faith from the marrow. Truly I love the man, who, by such a happy comment, has at last

* See this passage excellently illustrated by our author, in his Contemplations on the Night, Vol. I.

renewed and restored these bright gospel tidings to Job, to Christianity, and to us too, removing either unskilfulness in the Hebrew diction, or the carelessness of interpreters. But, reverend sir, I love and respect you the more ardently, whose most amiable friendship, which I have experienced on trial once and again, has caused me to hope from it a more abundant harvest of pleasure and advantage than I durst promise myself. That you may live and prosper, is the hearty wish of your much obliged

JAMES HERVEY.

P. S.—If upon the recovery of my health, I can be of any service to you in any business, I do not say you should ask it, but command it.

ON THE DEATH OF THE REV. JAMES HERVEY.

On vulgar marks Death long had meanly spent
His loaded quiver, and his bow full bent;
Monarchs, who had been great but for a crown,
Statesmen and heroes, sons of high renown;
When, lo! in Heaven this awful mandate past,
"To-morrow's dawn be some famed mortal's last!"
The tidings, to our world officious sent,
Through ALBION's isles on wing of lightning went:
Impiety, her heart by vipers stung,
Again blasphemes with loud audacious tongue;
Vice stalks abroad, each late retreat forsook,
With all her bold effrontery of look:
But, ah! while these malignant triumphs show,
Far other bosoms other feelings know!
The Muse in vain conceals her weeping eye,
And each tear Learning answers with a sigh;
Religion starts, though arm'd with tenfold shield,
And Virtue shrinks, though she disdains to yield:
—The arrow sped, Death took his aim too well,
The mitred pontiff lived, and HERVEY fell.

CHARACTER

OF

MR JAMES HERVEY'S WRITINGS.

THE Reverend Mr James Hervey being now dead, yet speaketh to us in his valuable writings; writings which, for importance of subject, weight of argument, sublimity of thought, justness of sentiment, and elegance of diction, are equalled by few, and excelled by none.

His strain is truly evangelical; his method inviting, entertaining, and edifying; calculated both to profit and to please: and a spirit of meekness, candour, and modesty, breathes through and beautifies the whole.

His favourite topic is the *righteousness* and *atonement* of the Redeemer. On this he expatiates with inexpressible satisfaction, and dwells with rapturous delight. By this he "touches the finest movements of the soul, and strikes all the inmost springs of action, with the most persuasive, the most commanding energy," and sweetly constrains to the obedience of love.

He ransacks the mansions of the dead, turns the grave into a pulpit, and makes putrefaction and mortality preach lessons to the living. He surveys, with Newtonian exactness, the *starry expanse*, and the countless radiant worlds that roll in the nocturnal sky: from these he investigates the glory and perfections of the creating and sustaining God; and from these he enhances the wonders of *redeeming love*. He mounts the believer on the summit of cr-

as upon a stupendous eminence, to enlarge his prospect, and exalt his conceptions of the majesty and glory of that God, who *redeemed his church with his own blood.* When imagination itself, with all the assistance of science, is lost in the immensity and awful grandeur of the works of nature; immediately he contracts the universe into a span, and the enormous orbs into fleeting atoms, or the small dust that remains in the balance, when the works of redemption are brought in view.

Thus, he unites the most improved philosopher with the sound believer; and makes reason and nature *subservient to* faith and revelation. Whilst he allows reason its freest inquiry and fullest scope, he gives up with none of the peculiarities of the gospel; but holds forth, with the clearest light, and in various points of view, those truths wherein the *offence of the cross* consists.

May these heavenly doctrines, and precious truths, which flowed in such copious, gladdening streams, from his lips and pen, be transmitted pure and unadulterated to the latest posterity; and may that divine Spirit, which gave them their proper energy and influence upon his heart and life, ever accompany them to remotest ages!

THE END.

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